COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

Volume VI WINTER 1954 Number 1

I contributi europei all'identificazione del barocco francese. By Franco Simone 1

Fairfax's Tasso. By Charles G. Bell 26

Góngora and Milton: Toward a Definition of the Baroque. By Lowry Nelson, Jr. 53

Goethe, Aristophanes, and the Classical Walpurgisnight. By Stuart Atkins 64

Book Reviews 79

La crisi dell'eroe nel romanzo vittoriano, by Mario Praz (Roland Ball). *English Literature in Germany*, by Lawrence Marsden Price (G. Waterhouse). *The World through Literature*, ed. by Charlton Laird (Wolfgang Bernard Fleischmann). *The Frenzied Poets: Andrey Biely and the Russian Symbolists*, by Oleg A. Maslenikov (Victor Erlich). *Howells and Italy*, by James L. Woodress, Jr. (Edwin H. Cady). *Introducción a la literatura medieval española*, by Francisco López Estrada (Gustavo Correa). *Rainer Maria Rilke-André Gide. Correspondance 1909-1926*, ed. by Renée Lang (Edith Kern).

Varia 94

Paul Sobry, 1895-1954. Books Received.

PUBLISHED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF OREGON, EUGENE, OREGON

With the Cooperation of the Comparative Literature Section of the Modern Language Association of America

Issued quarterly. Entered as second-class matter, April 5, 1949, at the postoffice at Eugene, Oregon, under act of August 24, 1912.

Comparative Literature

Editor

CHANDLER B. BEALL
University of Oregon
Eugene, Ore.

Associate Editor

WERNER P. FRIEDERICH
University of North Carolina
Chapel Hill, N. C.

Editorial Board

FRANCIS FERGUSSON
Rutgers University
New Brunswick, N. J.

VICTOR LANGE
Cornell University
Ithaca, N. Y.

HELMUT HATZFELD
Catholic University
Washington, D. C.

HARRY LEVIN
Harvard University
Cambridge, Mass.

RENÉ WELLEK
Yale University
New Haven, Conn.

FOUNDED at a time when the strengthening of good international relations is of paramount importance, *Comparative Literature* provides a forum for those scholars and critics who are engaged in the study of literature from an international point of view. Its editors define comparative literature in the broadest possible manner, and accept articles dealing with the manifold interrelations of literatures, with the theory of literature, movements, genres, periods, and authors —from the earliest times to the present. They particularly welcome longer studies on comparative topics and on problems of criticism.

Manuscripts, editorial communications, and books for review should be addressed to: Comparative Literature, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon.

The subscription rate is $3.50 a year. The price of single copies is $1.00. Correspondence concerning subscriptions should be addressed to: University of Oregon Publications, Eugene, Oregon. Correspondence concerning exchanges should be addressed to: University of Oregon Library, Eugene, Oregon.

Autres livres à télécharger sur le site
https://abbassa.wordpress.com

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

VOLUME VI WINTER 1954 NUMBER 1

I CONTRIBUTI EUROPEI ALL'IDENTIFICAZIONE DEL BAROCCO FRANCESE

FRANCO SIMONE

LA STORIA del periodizzamento dell'età classica nella letteratura francese acquista il suo vero significato se, oltre ai progressi critici compiuti in Francia,[1] si tengono presenti quante suggestioni preziose e talvolta illuminanti vennero offerte, in questi ultimi decenni, da studiosi rappresentanti le più diverse ed opposte culture nazionali. Non è possibile infatti dimenticare come a questo problema storico siano stati attratti, proprio in questi nostri anni ostili e dispersivi, non pochi dei più eminenti studiosi europei;[1a] quasi che a quel non facile banco di prova essi abbiano voluto misurare la precisione dei loro differenti metodi di recerca e tutti unirli nel comune sforzo di far progredire la com-

[1] Si veda F. Simone, "La storia letteraria francese e la formazione e dissoluzione dello schema storiografico classico," *Rivista di letterature moderne*, IV (1953), 3-22.

[1a] A buon diritto A. Boase ("Étude sur les poésies de J. de Sponde" in Sponde. *Poésies*, Ginevra, 1949, p. 85) ricorda "le caractère international de cette revision" di cui non esita a segnalare con ragione "l'inégalité de ses progrès." Lo studioso inglese è fra i pochi che sono coscienti dell'importanza di questa "grande revision de valeurs littéraires et artistiques" che giustamente appare "en marche peut-être depuis le début de notré siècle, quoique ses effets en France ne soient devenus sensibles que tout récemment." Cf. V. Cerny, "Les Origines européennes des études baroquistes," *RLC*, XXIV (1950), 25-45; L. Anceschi, "Rapporto sull'idea del barocco" in E. d'Ors, *Del barocco* (Milano, 1945), pp. ix-xxxiv; C. Calcaterra. "Il problema del barocco" in *Questioni e correnti di storia letteraria* (Milano, 1949), pp. 405-501; René Wellek, "The Concept of Baroque in Literary Scholarship," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, V (1946), 77-109.

prensione di un movimento letterario tanto interessante nella storia francese.

Fra tutti hanno sempre tenuto il primo posto, per importanza e per numero, i contributi, per altro fondamentali, degli studiosi germanici. Non c'è dubbio che se la cultura tedesca ha il merito di aver riabilitato, in questi ultimi cinquanta anni, l'età barocca in generale,[2] questo stesso merito deve esserle attribuito anche per quanto riguarda i poeti francesi di quel periodo. E questo certo non è avvenuto senza una ben definita tradizione critica. Poichè, se anche non si vuole ammettere la sovente proclamata sordità germanica per l'arte classica della Francia,[3] è indubitato che, per una tendenza quasi secolare, gli studiosi tedeschi sono sempre stati portati, si può dire istintivamente, a cercare nel secolo XVII quanto poteva rappresentare un gusto artistico ribelle al dominio imperioso della poetica classica. Già in questo senso credo debba essere valutata la ben nota pagina critica di Goethe in cui Du Bartas è giudicato uno dei più grandi poeti francesi.[4] Il diffidente sorriso di Sainte-Beuve, a questo riguardo, tutela soltanto il giusto senso delle proporzioni, ma senza avvertire il significato più vero dell'errore di prospettiva.[5] Giacchè proprio nella dichiarata ammirazione del poeta romantico per quanta poesia ribelle ad ogni schema veniva scoperta agli albori dell'età classica, non altro si deve vedere che la prova di un gusto così tradizionale da affermarsi criticamente uguale tanto nel primo Ottocento come nei decenni a noi più vicini.

Credo che proprio nel vitale procedere di questo interesse caratteristico della cultura tedesca si debba inserire la prima valida riabilitazione dell'arte barocca compiuta da H. Wölfflin.[6] Svizzero di educazione germanica, il noto storico dell'arte aveva ereditato dal Burckhardt una particolare sensibilità per i problemi artistici visti nella loro unica ed incomparabile originalità e, come il suo maestro di Basilea, aveva compreso il difetto della soluzione romantica che legava deterministicamente

[2] Cf. E. Trunz, "Die Erforschung der deutschen Barockdichtung," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, XVIII (1940), 1-100.

[3] Cf. E. R. Curtius, *Die französische Kultur, eine Einführung* (Stoccarda, 1930); trad. fr. Parigi, 1941, p. 169: "Il ne nous est pas facile, à nous autres Allemands, d'apprécier Racine à sa juste valeur. Lessing et beaucoup d'écrivains à sa suite nous barrent la route; la compréhension du classicisme français nous semble fermée." Cf. pure H. Peyre, *Qu'est-ce que le classicisme?* (Parigi, 1942), p. 139.

[4] Goethe, *Des hommes célèbres en France au XVIII^e siècle*, trad. française par de Saur et Saint-Géniès (Parigi, 1823), p. 102.

[5] Sainte-Beuve, *Tableau de la poésie française au XVI^e siècle*, ed. Charpentier (1842), p. 386: "...en fait de poètes et d'écrivains, chaque nation est, ce semble, le premier juge des siens; si grand que soit Goethe, cela ne le rend pas un arbitre plus sûr des vers français."

[6] H. Wölfflin, *Renaissance und Barock, eine Untersuchung über Wesen und Entstehung des Barokstils in Italien* (Monaco, 1888).

l'arte alla società e in modo particolare la poesia alla cultura.[7] Direi anzi che proprio questa reazione alla dottrina romantica per nascosti rapporti strettamente si collegasse alla svalutazione di quell'arte classica francese che era stata giudicata quale diretta espressione del gusto e della cultura della corte di Luigi XIV. Comunque è certo che del Burckhardt il Wölfflin accolse la più profonda conquista estetica e cioè quel concetto dell'autonomia dell'arte che da più parti nella cultura europea di quegli anni era stata affermata e difesa, facendo comprendere anche allo studioso del Rinascimento italiano che "nelle pretenziose storie cosidette 'evolutive' ci sarà il costume e il pensiero ma non c'è più l'arte."[8] Forte di questo principio, fin dal suo primo lavoro sui rapporti tra Rinascimento e Barocco, il Wölfflin rigetta per un lato la concezione romantica dell'arte come documento della storia,[9] mentre per altro non reagisce sufficientemente alla forza di astrazione del suo acuto spirito critico che osserva numerosi caratteri generali distintivi tanto dell'arte classica come di quella barocca. È lecito pensare che, così astraendo, il nostro studioso subisse quella generale tendenza della cultura tedesca che in quegli anni era portata a "tipizzare" ogni manifestazione dell'attività spirituale.[10] Certo è che, proprio per studiare il passaggio dall'arte classica all'arte barocca, il Wölfflin, pur insistendo sempre sull'individualità dell'opera artistica, sottolineò maggiormente l'ambiente in cui essa nasce e distinguendo l'arte originale dalla maniera, l'artista dalla sua scuola, fu portato a concepire vicino allo stile personale di un autore, uno stile collettivo. Questo egli giustificò praticamente servendosi dell'insegnamento goethiano dell'occhio che si educa contemplando un particolare paesaggio e a tal punto credette di aver scoperto un elemento fondamentale per comprendere un'epoca, da assumerlo a concetto distintivo in modo assoluto.[11] Per questa via teorica la storia della evoluzione delle forme trovò una sicura base, mentre per altro, applicata all'arte rinascimentale e a quella barocca servì a sottrarre quest'ultima da quel giudizio negativo al quale ancora l'aveva costretta il Burckhardt. Infatti, proprio per una scoperta forza evolutiva interna

[7] Cf. B. Croce, *La storia come pensiero e come azione* (Bari, 1938), p. 104.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 102.

[9] Non mi sembra quindi del tutto preciso quanto osserva l'Anceschi (*op. cit.*, p. xix): "...in lui [Wölfflin] infatti, per un aspetto l'esigenza di Kugler-Burckhardt di una storia della cultura attraverso l'arte si purifica in una mera storia di stili."

[10] Cf. C. Antoni, *Dallo storicismo alla sociologia* (Firenze, 1940), p. 216: "Da quando Dilthey cercò un compromesso tra il suo spiritualismo e il suo positivismo in una poesia dei tipi 'delle visioni della vita' e, dietro lui, Max Weber e Troeltsch ebbero introdotto il concetto di tipo nella storiografia della religione e della economia, tale concetto è divenuto il punto nodale intorno al quale si è disposto quanto, nella cultura storico-filosofica tedesca più recente, vi è stato di operante o per lo meno di vistoso."

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 214.

alla vita delle forme, lo stile barocco non veniva più considerato un momento di decadenza dello stile classico, ma un naturale sviluppo, un polo diverso a cui questo si dirigeva in un dato momento della sua storia. Bisogna per altro ben precisare che il Wölfflin, così tipizzando, affermò sempre di offrire non altro che sussidi alla comprensione dell'opera d'arte, essendo egli ben cosciente come gli elementi da lui generalizzati fossero tratti puramente dal campo culturale. Tuttavia, anche con questa precisazione, è impossible non vedere nella teoria del nostro studioso un ritorno alla concezione sociologica dalla quale egli proclamava di volersi allontanare definitivamente. Poichè, quella autonomia dell'arte che veniva affermata assumendo il concetto di rappresentazione (*Darstellung*) a principio essenziale di critica estetica, ritornava, con un circolo vizioso, ad essere negata introducendo come elemento importante della valutazione artistica una generale disposizione spirituale (*Gesinnung*), comune a tutti gli artisti di un'età. E pertanto, se l'accoglimento della teoria della pura visibilità dello Hildebrand pareva convincere il Wölfflin dell'allontanamento di ogni elemento contenutistico dallo studio dell'arte, con l'identificazione di uno stile collettivo creato astrattamente con elementi psicologici, si ritornava, per la caratterizzazione artistica, ai sentimenti, alle disposizioni d'animo e cioè al puro studio del contenuto.[12] Le ben note categorie ottiche—i famosi cinque punti—non essendo altro che delle categorie psicologiche, dei modi di vedere, esse possono servire la critica soltanto nel campo della cultura. Usate come furono dal Wölfflin per spiegare il passaggio dallo stile collettivo rinascimentale a quello barocco, esse, proprio per il loro intrinseco carattere culturale, sono del tutto inutili per caratterizzare un'opera d'arte, perchè, come è risaputo, questa sfugge ad ogni astratta e generale catalogazione.[13] Comunque aggiungerò, per giustificata ammirazione del grande storico, che egli ai limiti della sua teoria seppe supplire con la genialità di un sicuro talento critico, grazie al quale l'opera d'arte fu sempre salvata dall'inutilità dell'astratto catalogare.

Ora, per chi osserva la storia della dottrina wölffliniana, è facile comprendere come questa dovesse fatalmente svelare le sue debolezze appena fosse passata dai meditati ripensamenti del creatore a quelli

[12] Cf. B. Croce, "Un tentativo eclettico nella storia delle arti figurative" in *Nuovi saggi di estetica*, 3ª ed. (Bari, 1948), pp. 251-257. Il Russo (*La critica letteraria contemporanea*, Bari, 1942, I, 202) accenna giustamente, a proposito di una tendenza simile nella critica italiana, al passaggio da un sociologismo di contenuto a un sociologismo di pura forma. Si veda anche B. Croce, *Storia della storiografia del secolo XIX*, 2ª ed. (Bari, 1930), II, 182.

[13] Cf. C. Antoni, *op. cit.*, p. 228: "Poichè ogni *limitatio est negatio*, l'aggettivo non può essere che una indicazione di bruttezza. La storiografia dell'arte allorchè ricorre a schemi naturalistici ed è cieca alla bellezza coglie i difetti senza avvertire che sono difetti. L'arte che è originalità, genialità, sfugge allo schema e quello che rimane è l'uniforme, il mediocre, il legato ai gusti, alle mode, ai pregiudizi dell'epoca."

meno prudenti dei numerosi seguaci.[14] Così infatti accadde quando quei principî incominciarono ad essere diffusi ed applicati alla letteratura da quanti studiosi furono attratti dagli aspetti accessibili e più seducenti della teoria. Allora le cinque categorie apparvero, nella loro volontà di astratta sintesi, quello che veramente erano e cioè i prodotti di un'estetica positivista che, considerando l'arte un fenomeno stilistico, quella riduceva ad una povera realtà oggettiva.[15] Dirò di più: per opera dei divulgatori, dotati di molto minor talento del maestro, nelle cinque categorie dell'intuizione venne comodamente riassunta la pur grande complessità di una dottrina non unitaria nè nel suo sviluppo nè nella sua enunciazione. Quei criteri d'orientamento che l'autore stesso mai aveva voluto fissare in modo assoluto, furono trasformati in regole pratiche, utili per identificare, quasi magicamente, i capolavori dell'arte barocca.[16] E per questa via si giunse alle più aberranti posizioni critiche.

Se già nelle stesse opere del Wölfflin alcune precise indicazioni parevano sollecitare sviluppi della teoria oltre i confini delle arti figurative,[17] è certo che soltanto nel 1914 fu tentata una esplicita applicazione di questo metodo alla letteratura. Si può credere che, così operando, il Borinski, attento alla riabilitazione sempre più evidente del gusto barocco nella Germania di quel periodo, avvertisse il bisogno di ancorarsi a principi ermeneutici sicuri che gli permettessero di ben circoscrivere, vicino all'epoca medievale e al Rinascimento, un'età del barocco.[18] Per non differenti motivi, tre anni dopo, O. Walzel sosteneva la necessità di applicare allo studio generale di tutte le arti il metodo del maestro di Monaco.[19] Tale adattamento allo studio della poesia avveniva

[14] Cf. B. Occhini, "A proposito del Wölfflin: note polemiche sulla critica delle arti figurative," *La Rinascita*, V (1942); B. Croce, in *La Critica*, XLI (1943), 49-51.

[15] Cf. C. Antoni, *op. cit.*, p. 228: "In realta l'errore fondamentale del Wölfflin, comune del resto a buona parte della storiografia dell'arte moderna, sta nel considerare l'arte come qualcosa che l'arte non è, un fenomeno stilistico cioè realtà oggettiva."

[16] Cf. A. Janner, "Il castiglione e l'ariosto a sostegno di Enrico Wölfflin" in *Concinnitas: Beiträge zum Problem des Klassischen* (Basilea, 1944), p. 117.

[17] H. Wölfflin, *Renaissance und Barock*, pp. 83-85, dove viene suggerita l'opposizione tra l'*Orlando Furioso* e la *Gerusalemme liberata*.

[18] K. Borinski, "Mittelalter, Renaissance und Barock" in *Die Antike in Poetik und Kunsttheorie* (Lipsia, 1914), vol. I.

[19] O. Walzel *Wechselseitige Erhellung der Künste* (Berlino, 1917). Qualche anno dopo il Walzel dimostrò che molte delle idee del Wölfflin si trovano già in W. Schlegel che, a sua volta, sviluppò un'osservazione dell'olandese Hemsterhuys; cf. *Vom Geistesleben alter und neuer Zeit* (Lipsia, 1922), p. 85. Come è noto il Walzel applicò poi i concetti del Wölfflin anche al romanticismo (*Idee und Gestalt*, Potsdam, 1925). Lo studioso espose compiutamente le sue idee in due lavori: *Gehalt und Gestalt im Kunstwerk des Dichters* (Berlino, 1924) e "Das Wesen des dichterischen Kunstwerk" in *Das Wortkunstwerk* (Lipsia, 1926),

senza comprendere come quei concetti direttivi, giudicati utili per la storia dell'arte, proprio per le loro precise caratteristiche, male si prestassero a risolvere i problemi postulati dall'attività poetica. In verità già nel 1916 F. Strich aveva compiuto, con ben più rigorosa impostazione teorica, lo stesso tentativo del Walzel. Però, in questo caso, le cinque categorie dell'intuizione non erano più concepite nel loro puro carattere visivo, ma considerate categorie spirituali, utili per identificare nel barocco uno dei due fondamentali momenti della creazione artistica e più ancora un universale modo di intendere tutta la vita.[20] Come non vedere che per questa via la concezione del Wölfflin era condotta alle sue estreme conseguenze? Poichè se da un lato il concetto di barocco veniva arricchito di valori estetici, culturali e storici che nessuno ancora gli aveva tanto esplicitamente riconosciuto, per altro, nella rinnovata rottura dell'unicità della categoria estetica, esso veniva opposto al concetto di classico per formare un nuovo dualismo che segnava semplicemente un ritorno ad un superato pensiero romantico.

Meno rigorosi dello Strich, ma soprattutto più solleciti dell'intrinseco valore dei testi letterari, tanto lo Spoerri quanto il Weisbach, nell'intento di trarre dall'esperienza critica del Wölfflin tutti i vantaggi utili alla critica letteraria, sentirono la necessità di non accogliere, senza una attenta discriminazione, le cinque categorie dell'intuizione.[21] In modo particolare lo Spoerri si adoperò a precisare quali concetti letterari corrispondessero psicologicamente ed esteticamente ai principi ermeneutici usati per le arti figurative. Ed avendo riscontrato, con alcune possibili corrispondenze, delle tanto significative quanto sicure differenze, lo studioso fu convinto, nel maturare stesso della sua esperienza critica, di portare al metodo alcune profonde modificazioni.[22] In questa

pp. 100-122. Cf. K. Vossler in *Wissenschaftliche Forschungsberichte*, I (1919), 57-58; B. Croce, *op. cit.*, p. 257, e *Conversazioni critiche*, serie 3ª (Bari, 1932), p. 104.

[20] F. Strich, "Der lyrische Stil des 17. Jahrhunderts," *Abhandlungen zur deutschen Literaturgeschichte. Festschrift F. Muncker* (Monaco, 1916), pp. 21-53, e "Deutsche Barocklyrik ausgewählt und eingeleitet" in *Genius* (Monaco, 1921). pp. 106 sgg. Cf. P. Kohler, *Lettres de France* (Lausanne, 1943), p. 116, e W. Unus, *Die deutsche Lyrik des Barock* (Berlino, 1922). L'applicazione dei concetti del Wölfflin al romanticismo è esposta in *Deutsche Klassik und Romantik* (Lipsia, 1922), "Die Romantik als europäische Bewegung" in *Festschrift Wölfflin* (1924), *Der irrationale Mensch* (Berlino, 1928); cf. K. Vossler in *La Cultura* (15 agosto, 1922); B. Croce, *Storia dell'età barocca* (Bari, 1929), pp. 491-495; M. Puppo, *Orientamenti critici di lingua e di letteratura* (Genova, 1952), p. 45. Dello Strich si veda infine: *Der Dichter und die Zeit, eine Sammlung von Reden und Vorträgen* (Berna, 1949) dove un ampio capitolo è dedicato al barocco europeo. Cf. M. Boucher in *RLC*, XXIV (1950), 125-127.

[21] W. Weisbach, *Der Barock als Kunst der Gegenreformation* (Berlino, 1921).

[22] Th. Spoerri, *Renaissance und Barock bei Ariost und Tasso: Versuch einer Anwendung Wölfflin'scher Kunstbetrachtung* (Berna, 1922). Lo Spoerri dimostra che le qualità pittoriche corrispondono psicologicamente ed esteticamente alle

via il Weisbach operò ancora più decisamente, rifiutando ben due delle categorie wölffliniane e cercando di sostituirle con altri criteri più adatti alla creazione letteraria.[23] Ma, pur con simili tentativi, non pare che questi studiosi giungessero a nuovi risultati critici, utili per una più sicura conoscenza delle opere poetiche dell'età barocca. Giacchè, oltre al merito di continuare ed approfondire la rivalutazione di quel periodo, essi, in modi diversi ma tutti concomitanti, sempre più materializzavano un metodo critico che, se nei suoi sforzi denunciava un arbitrio compiuto sulla viva materia artistica, nei suoi risultati positivi non era che un semplice ritorno alla critica retorica di tutti i tempi.[24] Per quanto riguarda poi in modo particolare il problema metodologico, quelle ricerche, richiamandosi semplicemente, come ho detto, ai concetti critici del romanticismo, quelli inutilmente riprendevano contro i più nuovi risultati del pensiero estetico.[25] E in tal modo aumentava, a causa delle errate valutazioni e più ancora del vano sfoggio di testi malamente sollecitati, quella incertezza nel giudizio storico che formò appunto l'atmosfera critica in cui sorsero in Germania i primi studi sulla letteratura francese dell'età barocca. Non direi che le ricerche dell'Auerbach e dello Spitzer rispettivamente del 1926[26] e del 1928,[27] apertamente si richiamino alla dottrina del Wölfflin. Ma nella loro impostazione, nel metodo e più ancora nel fondamentale principio estetico che sta alla base, è chiaro

qualità musicali della letteratura. Mentre mantiene i concetti dell'unità contrapposta alla molteplicità e della forma chiusa opposta alla forma aperta, riduce gli altri concetti ai principi della scioltezza-limitazione e della indeterminatezza-rigidità. Cf. G. Bertoni, "Ariosto e Tasso," *Giornale storico della lett. italiana*, LXXXI (1923), 178-180; ora in *Lingua e pensiero* (Firenze, 1932), pp. 146-151.

[23] W. Weisbach, "Barock als Stilphänomen," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, II (1924), 225-256.

[24] Cf. B. Croce, *Conversazioni critiche*, serie 3ª (Bari, 1932), p. 152: "Con ciò è fatta altresì la critica degli 'schemi' del Wölfflin e di tutti questi consimili, proposti di recente in Italia e fuori: tutte cose che, sotto aspetto luccicante di modernità, rimenano all'antica rettorica."

[25] W. Weisbach, *Französische Malerei des XVII. Jahrhunderts im Rahmen von Kultur und Gesellschaft* (Berlino, 1932). A p. 3 e segg. il classico e il barocco non sono posti più sullo stesso piano, perchè di essi si nota la differenza qualitativa; ma non per questo viene superata l'opposizione romantica. Cf. B. Croce, *Conversazioni critiche*, serie 5ª (Bari, 1939), pp. 23-28. Il Weisbach cercava pure di definire il suo concetto di classico nel lavoro, "Die klassische Ideologie, ihre Entstehung und ihre Ausbreitung in den künstlerischen Vorstellungen der Neuzeit," in *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Lit. und Geist.*, XI (1933), 4. Cf. per questo B. Croce, *Conversazioni critiche*, *op. cit.*, p. 25, dove viene giustamente osservato che, per sfuggire all'estetica dommatica che fissa tipi e schemi universali, il Weisbach cade nelle teorie dei sensisti del Settecento e dei positivisti e relativisti dell'Ottocento.

[26] E. Auerbach, "Racine und die Leidenschaften," *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift*, XXVIII (1926); ristampato in *Mimesis: Dargestellte Wirklichkeit in der abendländischen Literatur* (Berna, 1946), cap. XIV, pp. 329 sgg.

[27] L. Spitzer, "Die klassische Dämpfung in Racines Stil," in *Archivum Romanicum*, XII (1928), 361-472; ora in *Romanische Stil- und Literaturstudien* (Marburg, 1931), I, 135-268.

che essi hanno risentito dell'attività a cui aveva dato impulso il grande storico. Certo, più evidente in quegli scritti è il desiderio di tracciare la storia della tradizione di un gusto che il primo dopoguerra germanico, nel disordine degli spiriti e delle aspirazioni, aveva accettato e poi affermato come congeniale alla cultura tedesca. Forse ancora più reale si manifesta il desiderio di rivalutare il classicismo francese con principi rinnovati da quel gusto e per esso da una concezione estetica erroneamente creduta nuova. Nelle opere del maggiore rappresentante francese del classicismo tanto lo Auerbach come lo Spitzer cercano elementi che, giudicati non classici, sono già definiti, anche se timidamente, barocchi. Tuttavia, il merito di aver rotto in quegli anni ogni indugio in proposito spetta a H. Hatzfeld.[28] In due studi, fondamentali per il nostro argomento,[29] l'insigne studioso si propose di indicare, con abbondanza di esempi tratti dalle opere più diverse, quelli che egli giudicava i caratteri essenziali che riunivano in un unico genere tutta la produzione letteraria francese dell'età barocca. Per la prima volta, così, un'epoca culturale, ancora vagamente delimitata, veniva definita in quelli che erano giudicati i suoi elementi distintivi. Chiedendo agli scrittori testimonianze che avevano un puro valore documentario, lo Hatzfeld si proponeva di caratterizzare un genere e precisava invece un momento dell'evoluzione culturale francese. Nella pienezza di vita (*Lebenfülle*) come nel *je ne sais quoi*, nel misticismo come nella melanconia egli indicava alcuni sicuri punti di orientamento.[30] Questi verranno giudicati in seguito tanto fondamentali che le correnti spirituali precisate da altri studiosi saranno storicizzate proprio mediante quella prima analisi generale. Intanto negli anni successivi continuavano su questa via sia il Merian-Genast[31] come il Rohlfs e il Friedrich[32] e quanti altri, studiando

[28] Non dimentico che, un anno prima dello Hatzfeld, F. Schürr aveva già sostenuto in un suo lavoro (*Barock, Klassizismus und Rokoko in der französischen Literatur. Eine prinzipielle Stilbetrachtung*, Lipsia, 1928) l'importanza della qualifica barocca per alcuni scrittori francesi da Rabelais ai burleschi e ai preziosi. Tuttavia soltanto lo Hatzfeld vide chiaramente l'importanza storica dell'applicazione del termine alla letteratura francese.

[29] H. Hatzfeld, "Der Barockstil der religiösen klassischen Lyrik in Frankreich," *Literaturwissenschaftliches Jahrbuch der Görresgesellschaft*, IV (1929), 30-60; "Die französische Klassik in neuer Sicht. Klassik als Barock," *Tijdschrift voor Taal en Letteren* (Tilburg), XXIII (1935), 213-281.

[30] Queste idee lo Hatzfeld riprenderà e svilupperà in altri due lavori fondamentali per il nostro argomento: "A Survey of the Recent Baroque Theories," *Boletin del Instituto Caro y Cuervo*, IV (1948), 1-33; "Clarification of the Baroque Problem in the Romance Literatures," *CL*, I (1949), 113-139.

[31] E. Merian-Genast, "Die Kunst Racines," *Die neueren Sprachen*, XL (1932), 135-157. Cf. pure "Corneille als Dichter des Stolzes," *Romanische Forschungen*, LI (1937); "Corneilles Wertgefühl im Spiegel seiner Bildersprache" in *Festschrift für E. Tappolet* (Basilea, 1935); cf. B. Croce, *La Critica*, XXXVI (1938), 291-292.

[32] G. Rohlfs, "Racines *Mithridate* als Beispiel höfischer Barockdichtung," *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen*, CLXVI (1936), 200-212. H.

Racine e Pascal, anche se con intenzioni dichiaratamente formalistiche, accennano agli elementi barocchi riscontrati nelle opere di quegli autori.

A conclusione di questo primo ciclo di ricerche, sono utili per indicare l'importanza storica della critica tedesca gli studi, ricchi di meditate osservazioni particolari, di Valdemar Vedel.[33] Accettato ormai senza indugi il principio estetico dell'esistenza storica di stili collettivi, lo studioso danese si propone di fissare l'importanza nella vita delle forme dello stile classico e di quello barocco. Egli parte dall'osservazione che lo stile classico, inteso tanto quale momento della cultura francese come un gusto e quindi un'espressione letteraria, non può essere compreso se non tenendo conto dello stile che lo precede, il barocco, e di quello che lo segue, il rococò.[34] I più illustri rappresentanti del classicismo altro non sarebbero che dei coscienti ribelli al gusto più diffuso del loro tempo. E poichè questo non è rappresentato dal classicismo ma dal barocco, essi avrebbero realizzato un momento di arresto del progresso generale dell'arte barocca verso il rococò.[35] Arresto che di fatto non fu se non un isolamento nella ricerca di un ordine diverso di bellezza che in quel momento era da pochi intesa e perseguita. Ne consegue che nella realtà della creazione artistica lo stile classico prosperò ed ottenne i noti risultati contemporaneamente alla ben più accetta vitalità dello stile barocco. Questa contemporaneità trova la sua ragione storica nell'esistenza di due profonde tendenze culturali che, richiamandosi a non meno precise tradizioni, esprimono due diversi ideali di moralità collettiva. Due classi sociali ben distinte avrebbero abbracciato questi diversi modi di intendere la vita da cui derivarono due modi di pensare, di agire, e infine di contare i propri sentimenti. Più di ogni altro Corneille rappresenta l'urto di queste opposte concezioni spirituali. "Il y a un style, dice il Vedel, à la fois entortillé et raide, une grandiloquence, une tension héroï-tragique, qui sont—comme les tragédies de Corneille—pour ainsi dire des compositions de fantaisie baroque et de discipline classique."[36]

Friedrich, "Pascals Paradox. Das Sprachbild einer Denkform," *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie*, LVI (1936), 322-370.

[33] V. Vedel, *Deux classiques français: Corneille et son temps—Molière* (Parigi, 1935). Fin dal 1914 lo studioso danese, nel suo lavoro "Den digteriske Barokstil omkring aar 1600," *Edda*, II (1914), 17-40, aveva descritto un preciso parallelo tra la pittura di Rubens e la poesia inglese e francese tra il Rinascimento e il Classicismo.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 6: "Le classicisme français doit être vu entre le *baroque* et le *rococo* ... [ce n'est que] par opposition aux extravagances, aux déformations de la nature de la littérature baroque qu'éclatent la vérité, la simplicité, l'équilibre de la littérature classique."

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 7; "Comme toujours quand il s'agit d'un développement historique, il n'est guère possible de faire les démarcations exactes entre l'ancien et le nouveau ... D'autre part, on ne peut dire que le baroque soit définitivement abandonné: en faveur auprès du public des salons, il se maintient, quoique à l'arrière-plan, auprès du classicisme, pendant tout le siècle et se transforme petit à petit en rococo."

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 36.

Ma in generale tanto nelle arti figurative come nella vita mondana, nel teatro come nella letteratura i rappresentanti dei due stili si trovano sempre tra loro in opposizione. In pittura Poussin opera la rottura voluta nella poesia da Racine. Lo stile barocco è richiamato nella vita mondana da tutta quella serie di atteggiamenti che nessuno meglio di Voiture ha sintetizzato. Nella letteratura il constrasto tra le due diverse bellezze artistiche si può facilmente rintracciare nella vasta produzione romanzesca influenzata dall'Hôtel di Rambouillet. Nel teatro lo stesso constrasto è segnalato dalla netta distinzione tra le opere regolari e quelle irregolari.[37] E così via enumerando. Ora, come non restare colpiti dall'estrema semplicità con cui viene risolta, sempre per la virtù magica di un principio estetico, la grande complessità di un periodo letterario, ricco e tanto vario? Poichè in queste pagine non prive di seducenti prospettive, il Vedel trae le conseguenze critiche, e mi pare senza alcun particolare sforzo e con molto acume, della accettata diretta dipendenza di ogni opera d'arte dalla società che la vede nascere e per essa dalla sua cultura. Fissate quelle particolari tendenze spirituali che egli accetta di chiamare barocche o classiche, da queste categorie, psicologiche e storiche ad un tempo, trae le categorie estetiche e con esse ogni testimonianza che vi riunisce attorno. Grazie a questa volontà critica è ridotto sotto due sole insegne tutto il periodo dal Rinascimento all'Illuminismo: i decenni, gli autori, le opere. Così quell'originale mondo colorito di bellezze viene chiuso negli astratti limiti di due tipi. Ad essi ogni sentimento è ricondotto e tutta l'arte. Con non differente rigore, qualche anno prima, già il Wölfflin aveva costretto nelle stesse categorie non un secolo soltanto, ma tutta l'arte italiana e quella germanica.[38]

Altri principî, diverso metodo, più nuovi interessi guidano le ricerche intraprese dagli studiosi anglosassoni sul nostro argomento. Dirò subito che, da questo punto di vista, la scoperta di una poesia barocca nella letteratura francese è per buona parte una avventura personale di Alan Boase. Nessuno degli studi che saranno intrapresi in seguito può vantare di essere stato condotto con quella sensibilità artistica e quella preparazione erudita che formano le doti preclare dell'eminente professore di Glasgow. Tuttavia, reso il dovuto onore a chi può vantare di aver dato l'impronta della propria personalità a fruttuose ricerche, si osservi come, anche in questo caso, l'avviamento sia venuto da un gusto particolare giunto a fruttuosa maturazione proprio in quel giro di anni. Rigettata, come si conviene, la leggenda di una scoperta fatta a

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 70: "Dans la lutte entre le théâtre libre et le régulier, entre les genres purs et les bâtards, le combat s'engage encore, nous venons de le voir, entre le baroque et le classique, tel que nous avons pu le suivre dans les lettres, l'art et le goût de la haute société."

[38] H. Wölfflin, *Italien und das deutsche Formgefühl* (Monaco, 1932); cf. A. Janner, "Wölfflin e l'arte italiana," *Civiltà moderna*, VI (1934), 425-434; C. Antoni, *op. cit.*, p. 230.

Cambridge di un manoscritto di Sponde[39] o più generalmente di un dimenticato esemplare inglese del *Recueil* di Raphaël du Petit Val,[40] l'esperienza letteraria del nostro studioso merita di essere ricordata come la testimonianza delle tendenze artistiche di una generazione.

La più meditata preparazione di A. Boase è tutta erudita. Già nel 1929 egli lavorava a quella storia della diffusione degli *Essais* di Montaigne nel Seicento che doveva servire a dimostrare quanto fosse persistente ancora tra gli scrittori classici la fortuna del moralista cinquecentesco.[41] Non per questo l'occhio attento del ricercatore, pur sollecito ad una ben fissata mèta, rifiutava quante possibilità gli venivano offerte di investigare ed ammirare il vario panorama letterario aperto sul limite di due secoli. Montaigne è un facile accesso a Mlle de Gournay. Di questa lo studioso legge la *Défense de la poésie française* (1619) e in modo particolare medita una pagina "d'une éloquence un peu cocasse"[42] dove la linea retta che secondo la tradizione critica condurrebbe dalla Pléiade a Malherbe, è tutta sconvolta o meglio spezzata in diverse correnti. A quella data quindi A. Boase è già sulle tracce della poesia alla cui rivalutazione legherà in seguito il suo nome. Incuriosito, si rivolge all'eruditissimo Lachèvre; ma nessun aiuto gli viene da colui che avendo scorso, forse per primo dopo secoli,[43] le raccolte poetiche di quegli anni, non seppe inseguire i richiami suggeriti dai nomi. Come immaginare un più significativo confronto tra due momenti vicini e pur tanto diversi nella storia della rivalutazione critica della nostra poesia? Da un lato, il rappresentante fedele del momento positivista che ai documenti aveva chiesto un cammino illuminato per ottenere maggiore aderenza alla realtà storica; dall'altro, il nuovo lettore pronto a segnalare le tradizionali consonanze di una nuova visione poetica. Poichè chi guida i passi di A. Boase è T. S. Eliot. Siamo nel periodo in cui, per vie in gran parte scoperte,[44] la nuova generazione di poeti inglesi, avendo maturato l'influenza simbolista, si pone il problema di arricchire a sua volta la poesia di nuovi poteri universali. Rifacendosi a Mallarmé più che a Valéry, quei giovani non ritornano a confondere

[39] M. Arland, *Anthologie de la poésie française* (Parigi, 1941), p. 282; "C'est à M. Alan Boase que je dois de connaitre Jean de Sponde dont à Cambridge il retrouva le manuscrit."

[40] Cf. M. Arland, *Le Promeneur: Essai sur Jean de Sponde* (Parigi, 1944), p. 126. Più cauto nella prefazione a J. de Sponde, *Œuvre poétique* (Parigi, 1945), p. xi, che per altro riproduce il saggio del 1944.

[41] A. Boase, *The Fortune of Montaigne, or A History of the Essais in France: 1580-1669* (Londra, 1935).

[42] A. Boase, *Étude sur les poésies de Jean de Sponde*, p. 90.

[43] Cf. F. Lachèvre, *Bibliographie des recueils collectifs de poésie de 1597 à 1700*, I (Parigi, 1901). Come è noto, Lachèvre descrive, pur con un errore di data, il volume in cui sono contenute quasi tutte le poesie di Sponde.

[44] E. J. Greene, *L'Influence de la littérature française dans l'œuvre de T. S. Eliot* (Parigi, 1948); cf. *RLC*, XXI (1948), 568; G. Rees, "A French Influence on T. S. Eliot," *RLC*, XVI (1936), 764-767.

teoricamente la conoscenza intellettuale con quella intuitiva. Ma nella loro aspirazione ad una poesia che vogliono "metafisica," senza nascondere un intimo entusiasmo per la ricerca speculativa, essi si propongono "pour raffiner et pour développer leur puissance de sensibilité et d'émotion" di ottenere "une expansion de leur sensibilité au-delà des limites du monde normal, une découverte de nouveaux objets propres à susciter de nouvelles émotions."[45] Non interessa qui dire come la parte positiva di questo tentativo, ben lontano dal condurre alla conquista di nuove verità filosofiche, potesse soltanto approdare ad una maturazione di sentimenti, unica fonte di vera poesia. Preme invece notare come, grazie a quel programma artistico, nella ricerca di una tradizione letteraria,[46] nuova fortuna arrise ai poeti metafisici inglesi e fra essi in modo speciale al Donne.[47] Nello sviluppo di questa riabilitazione A. Boase, sollecitato da T. S. Eliot, volle trovare nella cultura francese le corrispondenze letterarie di quei poeti,[48] e quasi a conferma che si cerca quello che si è già trovato, egli avvertì una perfetta aderenza con il suo principio artistico precisamente in quei poeti che aveva prediletto per seguire il cammino di un prosatore.

Questa è l'origine della prima approssimazione compiuta in Inghilterra verso la poesia francese dell'età barocca e a nessuno sfuggirà la singolare importanza della via percorsa e della novità raggiunta. Se già da qualche anno, come si è visto, la critica tedesca parlava di una corrente barocca in Francia, in alcun modo era stato compreso come questa trovasse la sua più sicura manifestazione nei primi decenni del Seicento

[45] T. S. Eliot, "Note sur Mallarmé," *Nouvelle Revue Française*, XIII (1926), 525.

[46] Cf. T. S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent" in *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism* (Londra, 1920).

[47] Si veda, a questo proposito, di T. S. Eliot la conferenza su Donne e i poeti metafisici nelle Clark Lectures del 1926 di cui M. Praz, "Donne's Relation to the Poetry of His Time" in *A Garland for John Donne* a cura di T. Spencer (Cambridge, 1931), pp. 58-59. È utile notare che questa riabilitazione viene interpretata da L. Anceschi (studio introduttivo a T. S. Eliot, *Il bosco sacro*, Milano, 1946) come un segno del ritorno di tutta la cultura europea alla tradizione classica. "In Eliot, viene osservato (p. 9), il classicismo . . . nel suo gioco arguto e tutto svolto tra sensibilità e intelligenza sottintende il ricordo di una età d'oro perduta tra Shakespeare e Donne e una presente memoria di Dante." Tuttavia bisogna subito aggiungere che, anche in questo caso, la critica e l'erudizione avevano fornito i materiali allo sviluppo e al consolidarsi di un nuovo gusto. Non diversamente da quanto era avvenuto, come si vedrà, in Spagna per l'anniversario di Góngora, il tricentenario di Donne nel 1931 attirò l'attenzione dei letterati sulla scuola dei poeti metafisici inglesi. Lo studio decisivo, a questo riguardo, di M. Praz è vicino a quello di T. S. Eliot nella raccolta di studi curata da T. Spencer in onore di Donne. Ma già nel 1925 il Praz aveva chiaramente sviluppato il concetto di barocco nella letteratura inglese (*Secentismo e marinismo in Inghilterra*, Firenze, 1925, specialmente pp. 94, 110, 113), seguendo la prima applicazione fatta all'opera dello Shakespeare nel 1916 da O. Walzel, "Shakespeares dramatische Baukunst," *Jahrbuch der Shakespeare-Gesellschaft*, LII (1916), 3-35.

[48] A. Boase, *Étude sur les poésies de Sponde*, p. 86.

e meno che mai erano stati fatti i nomi dei poeti segnalati dal Boase. Il quale, precisamente nel suo primo articolo sull'argomento,[49] partendo da un'allusione di G. Colletet diretta a Jean Godard,[50] mette nel dovuto risalto l'opposizione tra l'ideale artistico di Sponde e quello di Malherbe e prova come le più acute critiche di quest'ultimo si riferiscano non tanto ai continuatori della Pléiade quanto al più umile rivale. Alla poesia di Sponde viene attribuito il merito di aver compiuto una vera rivoluzione artistica proponendo una poetica contro la quale il grande riformatore combatterà accanitamente e vittoriosamente. Infine il Boase conclude quelle sue pagine così nuove segnalando la particolare importanza storica della poesia fra il 1580 e il 1630 ed invitando calorosamente a nuove ricerche.[51] In questo caso non si può dire che l'invito sia caduto nel vuoto. Poichè se quell'articolo non ebbe l'eco immediata che ben avrebbe meritato, ciò si deve al fatto che nel 1930 la critica francese in modo particolare non aveva ancora percorso un altro passo decisivo verso il nuovo orientamento. Ma quando, dopo pochi anni, questo passo sarà compiuto, le suggestioni del Boase a tal punto verranno accolte e seguite che sarà dimenticato persino, nel consenso generale, il doveroso riconoscimento al merito di chi, per primo, aveva indicato testi storicamente così importanti.[52] Per altro si ricordi, per testimoniare quanto fosse diffuso nella cultura quel progressivo avvicinamento a decenni trascurati del secolo XVI, che in quegli stessi anni Morris W. Croll, partendo esso pure dallo studio della fortuna postuma di Montaigne, giungeva a localizzare una corrente prosastica barocca che avrebbe percorso il Seicento francese in tutta la sua durata.[53] Anche in questo caso si trattava di uno sviluppo stilistico di origine latina: quello stesso che più tardi il Boase segnalerà in alcune dimenticate pagine di Sponde.[54]

---

[49] A. Boase, "Then Malherbe came," *Criterion*, IX (1930), 287 sgg.

[50] Cf. G. Colletet, *Traité de la poésie morale et sentencieuse* (Parigi, 1658), p. 185.

[51] A. Boase, *loc. cit.*, p. 296: "L'évolution de la poésie française après Ronsard et avant l'avènement de Malherbe mérite une enquête plus vaste qui pourrait bien enrichir de façon permanente la littérature française et entraîner une opinion un peu différente sur la position historique de celui-ci."

[52] Si tratta di alcuni testi di Sponde e di Du Bois Hus che sono riportati nella *Introduction à la poésie française* di Thierry Maulnier (Parigi, 1939), pp. 249-251, 254-256, per i quali A. Boase rivendica giustamente il merito della scoperta. Cf. *Étude sur les poésies de Sponde*, p. 86. Devo però osservare che, diversamente da quanto suggerisce il Boase, i testi di Laurent Drelincourt non sono ripresi dal Maulnier.

[53] Morris W. Croll, "Attic Prose in the Seventeenth Century," *Studies in Philology*, XVIII (1921), 79-128; "Attic Prose: Lipsius, Montaigne, Bacon" in *Schelling Anniversary Papers* (New York, 1923), pp. 117-150; "The Baroque Style in Prose" in *Studies in English Philology* (Minneapolis, 1929); "Muret and the History of Attic Prose," *PMLA*, XXXIX (1924), 254-309; "Juste Lipse et le mouvement anticicéronien à la fin du XVI^e siècle et au début du XVII^e siècle," *Revue du seizième siècle*, II (1904), 200-242.

[54] A. Boase, "Du nouveau sur Jean de Sponde," *Mercure de France*, CCCXII (1951), 641-647. Da sottolineare questa osservazione (p. 646),

Quando nel 1939 il direttore di *Mesures*, J. Paulhan, impegnò A. Boase per un articolo informativo sul suo poeta,[55] si può dire che, anche per questa via, la poesia dell'età barocca, superata la cerchia ristretta degli specialisti, raggiungeva il più ampio mondo della cultura. Ma, per meglio segnare il progresso dei contributi inglesi al problema critico, devono essere notate alcune conclusioni che il Boase, negli anni trascorsi dopo il suo primo articolo, aveva maturato nell'attento esame dei testi. Sempre sicuro dell'eccezionale importanza del nostro periodo letterario, lo studioso riafferma in modo ancor più netto come Sponde rappresenti il momento di transizione tra la Pléiade e il classicismo.[56] Nel tentativo di caratterizzare quella poesia egli si richiama nuovamente ai metafisici inglesi ed in Sponde ("un Donne manqué") indica l'esempio insigne di uno stile il cui principio generatore sarebbe un gusto per la sintesi condotta alle sue ultime conseguenze. Questo gusto sarebbe precisamente l'elemento fondamentale di un genere poetico che il Boase non esita a definire barocco. E così conclude: "Sans exagérer l'importance de Sponde en lui-même, l'examen de ses poèmes fait utilement comprendre la nécessité de tout un classement et d'une révision de valeurs dans la poésie du XVII^e siècle qui nous amènera à la découverte d'un certain baroque français qui a touché par un aspect ou par un autre presque tous les plus grands écrivains du siècle."[57] Come non vedere in questo accenno finale del nostro studioso la possibilità di giungere, al termine di nuove ricerche, alla divisione di tutta la letteratura del Seicento in quelle due correnti artistiche che già erano state distinte dalla critica tedesca? Per questa via adunque gli studiosi francesi venivano sollecitati ad intraprendere l'esame della poesia dell'età barocca. Nessuno dirà che fosse proprio questa la via più facile. Certo non era la più esatta, soprattutto da quando, per presentare il problema nella sua estrema formulazione, era giunta dalla Spagna un'interpretazione rumorosamente contrastante con le suggestioni discrete degli studiosi tedeschi ed inglesi.

Chi studia lo sviluppo della cultura europea all'inizio del nostro secolo non può non notare, con la vasta influenza esercitata dalla letteratura

---

ricca di prospettive che attendono di essere studiate: "On y voit mieux chez cet esprit nourri à la fois de l'humanisme et de la Bible cette conjonction de deux claviers, on saisit mieux dans la prolixité relative de sa prose à quel point ce goût pour les *pointes* et les *contrebatteries de mots* doit à des procédés de style latin."

[55] A. Boase, "Jean de Sponde: un poète inconnu," *Mesures*, 1939, No. 4 (ottobre), pp. 127-151.

[56] *Ibid.*, p. 130: "Sponde marque mieux que des poètes plus célèbres le sens profond de la transition entre la Pléiade et la poésie du XVII^e siècle. Chez lui on voit d'ailleurs à la fois, des tendances qui persistent et aussi quelques qualités qui ne se retrouvent que plus rarement aprés lui et qui rappellent plutôt certains poètes anglais de l'époque."

[57] *Ibid.*, p. 135.

francese, la curiosa identità del processo assimilativo da parte delle varie culture nazionali. Infatti, non diversamente da quanto sono venuto rapidamente indicando per la cultura inglese, anche quel gruppo di letterati, che nella Spagna del primo dopoguerra, incominciò a dare segni vigorosi di attività rinnovatrice, si richiamò ad una precisa tradizione. Si può ben dire adunque che "il gusto d'avanguardia sia favorevole ad alcuni fenomeni di ritorno."[58] Certo, nel nostro caso, Mallarmé e l'impressionismo rappresentarono le due vie attraverso le quali i letterati spagnoli giunsero a Góngora e a Goya.[59] Desiderosi di rinnovare, sui modelli parigini, l'arte in tutte le sue espressioni, essi crearono quello "stile neogongorino," che definirono come un "barroquismo formal que se deleita en visiones divergentes y en metáforas insólitas."[60] Partiti da una poetica volontaristica che desidera una lucida coscienza dell'atto creativo, essi dovevano giungere inevitabilmente a quella valutazione della pura tecnica che permetterà loro ogni eccesso e tutte le libertà. Come pensare pertanto che l'arte barocca non rappresentasse per loro un prezioso esempio e un notevole incitamento? Ben si comprende quindi che nel 1927, a proposito del tricentenario del Góngora, la nuova tendenza artistica segnasse il suo maggiore successo.[61] Il numero speciale dedicato all'ammirato poeta da *La Gaceta Literaria* ne è un'importante testimonianza.[62] Ma ancora più importante pare a me il fatto che proprio in quel periodo, per il curioso incontro di una celebrazione con un interesse generale a tutta la cultura europea, a tal punto i letterati spagnoli imponessero un nuovo modo di gustare la poesia da ottenere con la riabilitazione di un poeta, la definizione completa di una epoca.[63] Il periodo barocco della letteratura spagnola venne così sempre più acquistando una sua chiara definizione ed una sicura autonomia tanto che ad essa allora dedicarono una sollecita attenzione gli uomini più rappresentativi della cultura spagnola, da Dámaso Alonso[64] a

[58] E. d'Ors, *Del barocco*, a cura di L. Anceschi (Milano, 1945), p. 57.

[59] Cf. G. de Torre, *Literaturas europeas de vanguardia* (Madrid, 1925), parte II, cap. II: "Precursores: Góngora y Mallarmé," pp. 307-308.

[60] *Ibid.*, p. 115.

[61] Cf. V. Cerny, *loc. cit.*, pp. 43-44.

[62] Cf. F. Meregalli, "La Gaceta Literaria," *Letterature Moderne*, III (1952), 168-175. Si noti come la vecchia generazione restasse ostile al Góngora. Cf. i giudizi riportati dal Meregalli di Unamuno ("sigue siendo para mí un desconocido") di Baroja ("no lo conozco bien") di Valle Inclán ("inaguantable"). Osserverò ancora che quei poeti che da questa tradizione avevano tratto i migliori vantaggi, incominciavano già in quell'anno a distaccarsi. Valga fra tutti l'esempio di García Lorca (p. 174).

[63] Si deve infatti ricordare che questo ritorno fu di breve durata nel campo artistico, mentre segnò forse i suoi migliori resultati, come ho detto, nel campo culturale. Nel 1930 G. de Torre, rivendicando per sè il merito di aver usato (nell'*op. cit.*) il termine *vanguardia*, sosteneva che esso non aveva ormai più alcun significato. Cf. F. Meregalli, *loc. cit.*, p. 173.

[64] D. Alonso, *Los temas gongorinos* (Madrid, 1927), *La lengua poética de Góngora* (Madrid, 1927).

Ortega y Gasset,[65] ed ogni aspetto di una spiritualità che si volle dalla Spagna diffusa a tutta l'Europa, venne ripreso, attentamente studiato, quasi esaltato.

Tuttavia toccò ad Eugenio d'Ors il compito di trarre la più importante sintesi teorica da questo nuovo passo della cultura spagnola. L'incontro con il barocco di colui che deveva essere il suo più valido difensore risale almeno al 1908. Quando il Greco incominciava ad essere ammirato come un precursore e Góngora già suscitava un nuovo culto poetico, il d'Ors sentì la bellezza dell'architettura del Churriguera e ne intuì le possibili influenze.[66] Da allora, partecipando attivamente al rinnovamento della cultura spagnola, mentre andava maturando per conto suo una ben assorbita educazione germanica, egli costruì un sistema filosofico[67] che espose per la prima volta in modo preciso nella sua tesi del 1909 (*Formule biologique de la logique*). Partendo da osservazioni biologiche e spostando poi i risultati al campo psicologico, il d'Ors indagava, con metodi personali tratti dalle scienze esatte, i rapporti tra ragione e vita. Questi rapporti a tal punto gli apparivano capitali per distinguere il vario atteggiarsi del mondo spirituale che egli venne logicamente portato a teorizzare un dualismo categoriale, fondato precisamente sulla antitesi di ragione e vita. Egli intese la vita come slancio delle forze irrazionali cioè quanto sfugge al controllo della logica, un insieme di elementi che nel 1920 egli stesso identificherà con l'eterno femminino (il goethiano *Ewig-weibliches*). Poichè dalla parte opposta egli pone la ragione cioè l'attività creatrice delle leggi logiche, fra questi due poli si svilupperebbe tutta l'attività spirituale secondo una forza dialettica che continuamente l'arricchisce. Ora, per uno sviluppo che gli venne suggerito dai problemi culturali che lo attiravano in quegli anni, il d'Ors senza indugio identificò il polo vitale con il barocco e il polo razionale con il classico. Soltanto in seguito (1931) tanto il concetto di barocco quanto quello di classico acquisteranno il valore, non soltanto di categorie spirituali, ma di costanti storiche. Allora essi faranno parte, come il feudalesimo, la federazione, l'impero, di una serie di *eoni* cioè di archetipi di manifestazioni varie nelle quali vi è un denominatore comune.[68] Tuttavia, si osservi come già nella prima fase dello sviluppo della teoria l'opposizione tra i due concetti fosse ben chiaramente definita, rappresentando la naturale op-

[65] Ortega y Gasset, "Góngora" in *Espíritu de la letra* (Madrid, 1927).

[66] E. d'Ors, *Del barocco*, p. 3: "Questo libro è un romanzo, un romanzo autobiografico; l'avventura di un uomo che, lentamente, si innamora di una categoria. Egli ricorda se stesso, adolescente, in un'ora, anche se fuggitiva, di rapito piacere e mascherato—perchè è proprio in occasione di un ballo in maschera, la folle orgia del *Churriguerismo* spagnolo, che gli apparve la categoria del barocco."

[67] Cf. J. L. Aranguren, *La filosofía de Eugenio d'Ors* (Madrid, 1945), L. Anceschi, *Eugenio d'Ors e il nuovo classicismo europeo* (Milano, 1945).

[68] E. d'Ors, *Del barocco*, p. 48.

posizione tra due momenti, distinti e contrari, dello spirito. Chi vedesse in questa concezione del nostro filosofo un altro esempio di quella tendenza a "tipizzare" della cultura tedesca di cui si è fatto cenno, non credo che andrebbe errato. Comunque non c'e dubbio che proprio sviluppando questa tendenza e senza trattenerla in stretti limiti rigorosi, il d'Ors, in reazione contro ogni determinismo regolato da legge, precisò il concetto di eone come "una permanenza che ha la sua storia, una eternità ricca di vicende."[69] E di conseguenza, non diversamente dai suoi simili, anche l'eone barocco fu descritto come un elemento permanente in una successione storica di manifestazioni che dalla preistoria arrivano fino ai nostri giorni.

Quando nel 1931 la teoria venne esposta a Pontigny[70] ad un folto gruppo di studiosi, i principali problemi posti dall'esistenza di una cultura e di un'arte barocca erano tutti risolti nel senso che il d'Ors affermava essere il barocco una costante storica, un fenomeno che riguardava non solo l'arte ma tutta la civiltà, infine una categoria positiva in netta opposizione alla categoria classica.[71] Nè era evitata l'applicazione di un concetto così generalizzato alla letteratura francese. Lo stesso filosofo prese cura di indicare a quali distinzioni del genere barocco appartenessero alcune delle più famose espressioni dell'arte francese. Mentre non ebbe alcun dubbio di considerare le opere di Corneille e di Pascal manifestazioni del *barocchus tridentinus*,[72] riunì Poussin[73] e Racine, Molière e poi Montesquieu e Voltaire rispettivamente nel *barocchus maniera* e in quello *rococò*. A quest'ultimo ascrisse tutto lo stile Luigi XV e soprattutto le opere musicali di quell'epoca. Poi considerò Watteau rappresentante del *barocchus nordicus* per giungere gradatamente per questa via al *barocchus finisecularis* di Rimbaud e Bergson e poi al *barocchus postea-bellicus* delle ultime manifestazioni d'avanguardia.[74] In questo modo egli si proponeva di abbattere l'eterna resistenza della critica francese al barocco, sottolineando, con uno sforzo di ingegnosità non certo privo di acume critico, degli elementi comuni fra i più lontani autori che indubbiamente rivelavano identiche e forse non ancora sospettate posizioni psicologiche.[75]

---

[69] *Ibid.*, p. 52.

[70] *Ibid.*, pp. 59-103.

[71] *Ibid.*, p. 56.

[72] *Ibid.*, p. 67: "Le tesi sostenute confermavano in sostanza il carattere cosmopolita del processo barocco: tutte in effetti si riducevano a mostrare l'esistenza del barocco perfino negli spiriti considerati profondamente classici nel corso della tradizione francese: un barocchismo relativo c'è in Poussin, Racine, Molière, Montesquieu o Voltaire; e non è nemmeno da dire: in Corneille ed in Pascal."

[73] Per questo artista in particolare si ricordi di E. d'Ors l'opera, *Poussin y el Greco* (Madrid, 1922).

[74] E. d'Ors, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-96.

[75] Cf. P. P. Trompeo, "Strano classicismo di uno scrittore prezioso" in *Nuovo Corriere della Sera*, 22 agosto, 1946; ora in *La pantofola di vetro* (Napoli, 1952);

Come ognuno può vedere, era questo l'estremo possibile sviluppo della posizione teorica del Wölfflin. Anche se nessuno più dello storico svizzero sarebbe stato reciso nel rifiutare i reali rapporti che fanno discendere dalle sue premesse la teoria del d'Ors, certo è che, accettando sul piano estetico il dualismo categoriale, era facile trasportarlo di conseguenza nel campo della cultura e quindi, per via di sempre più ampie astrazioni, giungere a significare un fondamentale momento della vita spirituale. Il d'Ors, colpito a sua volta dall'importanza dell'irrazionale nella vita dello spirito, credette di identificare questo con un particolare atteggiamento artistico e così facendo ritornò ad una posizione nietzschiana che non dovrebbe essere estranea neppure al Wölfflin. Ma proprio denunciando questo rapporto, della teoria del pensatore spagnolo non può essere dato altro giudizio di quello che si formula comunemente per il dualismo apollineo-dionisiaco: bella costruzione audace di un artista, non di un rigoroso pensatore.[76]

Dopo quanto sono venuto esponendo, nessuno stupirà se questa teoria, quando venne divulgata, trovò una forte resistenza in Francia.[77] Forse sarà una pura coincidenza, ma ugualmente merita di essere notato che in quegli stessi anni E. R. Curtius, quasi in risposta alla visione barocca di gran parte della letteratura francese, sosteneva che in terra di Francia rinasce continuamente l'indefinibile fluido dello spirito classico.[78] Era anche questa un'astrazione, generalizzata essa pure forse in modo eccessivo; ma non c'è dubbio che, più di quella de E. d'Ors, trovava consensi. Richiamandosi allo schema tradizionale ben noto e

F. Neri, "Barocco" in *La Nuova Stampa*, 10 luglio, 1946; ora in *Poesia del tempo* (Torino, 1948), pp. 56-59. Cf. p. 57: "Ma non lo seguiremo per questa via che è sparsa di accenni, di analogie, di richiami d'un tempo e dell'altro; richiami che non sono nè fantastici nè assurdi, ma che svisano, in complesso, i caratteri di ciascuna età, estraendone, per farli campeggiare, alcuni elementi formali e psicologici che si possono dire barocchi come si erano detti romantici e che appartengono universalmente all'uomo."

[76] Cf. B. Croce, recensione al volume *Du baroque* in *La Critica*, XXXVI (1938), pp. 226-227; ora in *Conversazioni critiche*, serie 5ª (Bari, 1938), pp. 15-20: "L'idea più luminosa o unitaria che ho trovato nel libro del d'Ors è che il barocco in quanto categoria spirituale o in quanto stato d'animo è 'la nécessité de l'irrationnel, le recours à la nature ou, si l'on veut, à la folie' e può considerarsi nel corso della vita e della storia come il necessario e consentito carnevale. Sarà; ma perchè allora non chiamare Carnevale il Carnevale e ribattezzarlo, invece, Barocco?" Si veda anche la recensione al volume *Del barocco* in *Quaderni della Critica*, No. 4 (aprile, 1946), pp. 83-84.

[77] La traduzione francese dell'opera fondamentale sul barocco di E. d'Ors è del 1935 (*Du baroque*, Parigi, Gallimard). L'autore ritornò sull'argomento in due articoli: "Du baroque," *Nouvelle Revue Française*, XLVIII (1937), e "Le baroque comme constante historique," *Bulletin de l'Union pour la vérité*, 1937.

[78] E. R. Curtius, *op. cit.*, trad. francese, p. 172: "Le fluide indéfinissable de l'esprit classique renait sans cesse de la terre française." Proprio nel 1931 di E. R. Curtius un articolo sull'importanza del classicismo nella cultura francese veniva pubblicato in Francia: "Abandon de la culture," *Nouvelle Revue Française*, XXXVII (1931), 849-867.

già illustrato, è chiaro che il Curtius riproponeva una visione normale delle lettere francesi. Tuttavia resti ben sicuro che, pur ristabilendo un equilibrio, non evitava il fruttificare di problemi che soltanto il filosofo spagnolo,[79] con il suo modo paradossale, aveva il merito di riportare all'attenzione degli studiosi.

Mentre nella cultura europea, per le diverse vie qui rapidamente indicate, il concetto di barocco era chiamato a rappresentare una valida positiva forma artistica, imponendo la revisione di tutto un periodo della storia letteraria francese, dall'Italia giungeva una voce discordante che energicamente si proponeva di riportare quel concetto al suo tradizionale significato negativo. Sovente e da più è stata dimostrata non poca meraviglia che B. Croce, riconosciuto quale uno dei più sicuri conoscitori della letteratura secentesca, avesse preso una così netta posizione e, pur contro la generale tendenza degli studi contemporanei, continuasse a rivendicare a se stesso il privilegio di rappresentare da solo una interpretazione che si voleva superata. A giustificazione di tale idea giudicata eccessiva, taluno pensò ad una incomprensione per l'arte barocca istintiva nel Croce; altri volle credere alla persistenza di un errore giovanile mai denunciato; infine i più, senza neppur domandarsi se quella ostinazione non derivasse da un ben ragionato motivo teoretico, hanno creduto di vedere in quel giudizio uno dei limiti di tutta l'estetica crociana. In verità, chi ben ricordi quanti lavori il Croce, fin dai suoi anni giovanili, dedicò alla cultura e alla poesia dell'età barocca, non può misconoscere il grande interesse che lo studioso sempre ebbe per un periodo storico da lui investigato ed illustrato nelle sue caratteristiche, nelle sue tendenze, nella sua stessa originalità.[80] Direi anzi che fu proprio questo costante interesse che lo indusse a mettere in luce e non soltanto nella cultura italiana, ma, come si vedrà, anche in quella francese, quanto di quel periodo egli giudicava bello per la poesia, vitale per il pensiero, valido per la morale. Onde, con piena ragione, egli potè nel 1929 rivendicare a sè l'onore di aver ristudiato con nuovi schemi e più sicuri criteri tutta la filosofia, la letteratura e il modo di vita del Seicento.[81] Che questo ammirato interesse non sia mai stato nè cieco nè esclusivo, come farne una colpa al nostro critico?

Piuttosto, in primo luogo, pare a me doveroso riconoscere al Croce

[79] Più rigoroso del suo connazionale, anche A. Castro tuttavia si poneva su questo cammino nel suo studio, "El Don Juan de Tirso y el de Molière como personajes barrocos" in *Hommage à Ernest Martinenche* (Parigi, 1937), pp. 93-111.

[80] Cf. L. Russo, *La critica letteraria contemporanea* (Bari, 1942), I, 212: "Questa preferenza accordata al secolo più napoletano della nostra letteratura è ovvia: è la stessa tradizione respirata nella città dei suoi studi dove egli si muove da più di mezzo secolo. Ma non si tratta di semplice inclinazione sentimentale o biografica: essa è il gusto di un nuovo orientamento della storiografia letteraria che conduce il Croce a far luce in quel secolo perchè tanto infamato o malfamato."

[81] B. Croce, *Storia dell'età barocca* (Bari, 1929), p. xii.

il merito di aver ricordato a quanti in questi nostri anni si affaticano attorno al concetto di barocco, come sia urgente ancora una volta validamente opporsi alla corrente romantica per "medicare e rimarginare la crudele ferita, la piaga sanguinosa che nel concetto dell'arte, sotto specie di offrirgli un dono, fu inferta e aperta or è un secolo e mezzo, dalla dottrina che nacque in Germania e che spezzò per la prima volta l'unità della poesia in 'classica' e 'romantica.' "[82] Poichè, come qui chiaramente appare, nessuno più del nostro studioso intuì che, nella generale rivalutazione dell'arte barocca, si nascondeva un nuovo progresso della crisi di cui continuava a soffrire il concetto dell'unicità della categoria estetica.[83] Ben consapevole come questo concetto fosse una delle più sicure conquiste del pensiero moderno, il Croce non cessò mai di difenderlo. E come già nell'*Estetica* aveva validamente proclamato l'impossibilità di suddividere il grado intuitivo-espressivo,[84] così nel 1903, discorrendo del verismo e del simbolismo, aveva giudicato dal punto di vista filosofico questi termini, non diversamente dal classicismo e dal romanticismo, come "distinzioni erronee e pleonasmi confusionari."[85] Non meno polemicamente era ritornato su questo concetto fondamentale nel *Breviario d'Estetica* (1912), negando la possibilità di catalogare i grandi artisti e le grandi opere nei generi letterari o in qualsiasi retorica categoria;[86] mentre poi nell'*Aestetica in nuce* (1928) avvertiva nuovamente la necessità di non tralasciare di difendere il concetto dell'individualità dell'arte variamente minacciata dai numerosi tentativi che nel secolo XIX e nel primo Novecento era possibile denunciare.[87] Tuttavia se a questa difesa il Croce non cesserà mai di dedicare pagine preoccupate e polemiche,[88] come quelle non prive di efficacia de *La poesia*,[89] direi che la più sintetica chiarificazione del problema è stata da lui

[82] B. Croce, "Categorismo e psicologismo nella storia della poesia" in *Ultimi Saggi*, 2ª ed. (Bari, 1948), p. 375.

[83] Cf. B. Croce, *Storia dell'età barocca*, p. 492.

[84] B. Croce, *Estetica*, 6ª ed. (Bari, 1928), p. 76.

[85] B. Croce, in *La Critica*, I (1903).

[86] B. Croce, *Breviario di Estetica*, in *Nuovi Saggi di Estetica*, 3ª ed. (Bari, 1948), pp. 26, 45.

[87] B. Croce, *Aestetica in nuce* in *Ultimi Saggi*, pp. 26-28.

[88] B. Croce, *Poesia popolare e poesia d'arte*, 2ª ed. (Bari, 1946), p. 3; "... perchè la poesia non ammette categorie di nessuna sorta e, quando è poesia, è unicamente poesia e anche in questo caso bisogna guardarsi dalla tentazione di romperne l'unità, tentazione che è stimolata dal fatto stesso che il contrasto di *Volkslied* e *Kunstlied* fu messo in onore soprattutto da quel popolo che pel primo foggiò le diadi di classico e romantico, di latino e germanico e altre consimili, introducendo concetti corruttori del puro giudizio estetico."

[89] B. Croce, *La poesia*, 4ª ed. (Bari, 1946), p. 119: "Notevole è in questo riguardo l'odierno assurgere in Germania di una nuova forma ideale che si aggiunge alle due prime, il *barocco*: la quale forma ideale deriva da un concetto esteticamente negativo e tuttavia è stata trasferita a determinazione di un particolare atteggiamento della poesia e della letteratura."

tentata discutendo nel 1932 uno scritto di M. Rossi.[90] In questa occasione il filosofo limpidamente precisò che in tutti i tentativi di qualificare in qualunque sia modo la poesia, si commetteva un errore logico in quanto si contaminava una questione metodologica o categoriale con una questione storica. Non è difficile infatti comprendere che non è certo sollevando ad un valore universale un concetto puramente psicologico che si può presumere di rompere l'armonia precisa dell'umana spiritualità sovvertendo le eterne sue categorie. E, per altro verso, anche qualora si volessero rimettere in discussione i modi fondamentali in cui lo spirito umano si atteggia, questo non si potrebbe fare se non con un assoluto rigore logico e non certo servendosi di concetti psicologici. Pertanto, mantenendo intatto il concetto dell'unicità della categoria estetica, il barocco come il romantico,[91] non diversamente dal classico e dal decadente, si presentano come termini di puro valore pratico e quindi dal punto di vista estetico, di preciso valore negativo.

Così, cioè in dipendenza di una posizione teoretica fondamentale, vuole essere giudicata la valutazione crociana del barocco che, appunto per questa sua natura, ben lontana dall'essere un misconoscimento di valori estetici, ne è invece la più sicura difesa.[92] Poichè, accettata l'indivisibile unicità della bellezza artistica, è chiaro che ogni qualificazione non potrebbe essere che limitazione e pertanto negazione della sua stessa natura *(limitatio est negatio)*. Non sarà quindi possibile, nel nostro caso, qualificare di barocca la poesia francese fiorita in Francia tra il Rinascimento e l'Illuminismo poichè, ogni qualvolta la realtà dei fatti parrà costringerci a così giudicare, indicheremo le più varie manifestazioni culturali, ma non certo la vera, unica ed illimitata bellezza.

Adunque, rivolgendosi a quanti ritornavano all'età barocca in questi ultimi decenni per interesse storico o per necessità artistiche, il Croce

[90] B. Croce, "Categorismo e psicologismo nella storia della poesia," *La Critica*, XXX (1932), 157 sgg.; ora in *Ultimi Saggi*.

[91] Si osservi come il Croce, per entrambi i termini, applichi lo stesso metodo di distinzione fra un significato ideale o categoriale, un significato storico-culturale ed un significato letterario. Per quanto riguarda il barocco, discuterò altrove gli altri due significati attribuiti dal Croce e cioè quello artistico-storico e quello etico-spirituale.

[92] B. Croce, *La poesia*, pp. 155-156: "Ora è certo che quel secolo [il Seicento] non produsse solo cose di valore negativo ossia brutte, ma anche opere variamente ragguardevoli per letteraria efficacia e perfino di quelle che hanno virtù di fantasia e poesia, delle quali tutte si è venuto ai giorni nostri rivendicando il carattere e il pregio contro criteri troppo angusti di giudizio, nelle arti della parola non meno che in quelle figurative e architettoniche. Ma di qui anche le poco accorate obiezioni a chi restaura e mantiene in quel termine il significato originario negativo che è il solo teoricamente corretto, di una forma di bruttezza: obiezioni che si assommano nell'affermare che esistono opere 'barocche che sono belle' e che perciò il barocco è 'una forma d'arte' ossia nel passare irriflessivamente dall'uso scientifico e proprio a quello di metafora storica usata a designare un complesso o una sequela di opere che sotto l'aspetto estetico debbono considerarsi e giudicarsi ciascuna nella sua individualità."

avvertiva con insistenza, reagendo ad ogni infatuazione astratta e generalizzante, di sforzarsi ad individuare in quel periodo di così grande importanza i veri valori poetici. Nè altro, per conto suo, egli si proponeva nei suoi studi ben definendo, limitando e giudicando le manifestazioni letterarie di una concezione artistica che, con lo stupore e la meraviglia si proponeva di ottenere risultati non già estetici, ma pratici.[93] Per altro, ogni qualvolta la poesia dava palesi segni della sua incantevole presenza, lo studioso non mancava di indicarne l'importanza e con essa l'ammirata valutazione.[94] Se questo raramente avvenne per la poesia italiana del Seicento, non altrettanto si può osservare per la poesia francese di quella stessa età dove l'opera selettiva del critico non si lasciò sfuggire una larga messe di sicuri ed attraenti esempi della lirica migliore.

Non saprei dire se l'esatta valutazione dell'opera poetica del Du Bartas[95] sia un'eco diretta del giudizio già ricordato del Goethe. Certo così come essa si presenta, nell'aderenza all'opera che caratterizza, appare priva, più che mai, di ogni preconcetto proprio come del tutto libero da ogni voluta svalutazione è il breve giudizio sull'opera di Cyrano de Bergerac considerata quale tipica testimonianza del barocchismo francese.[96] Questo, quando viene osservato nella sua complessità, al Croce appare, ben diversamente da quello italiano, "più o meno estrinseco o episodico."[97] Nè tale giudizio sembri superficiale al ricordo di tutte le più recenti ricerche che hanno dimostrato l'ampia diffusione della maniera barocca nella letteratura francese tra il Rinascimento e l'Illuminismo. Poichè, ben riflettendo, esso è ricco di una sua verità se si considera la grandezza della vera poesia di quegli anni fortunati. Vicino ad espressioni altamente liriche di sentimenti vissuti o sofferti potè nuocere in modo appena superficiale lo sviluppo pur vigoroso di un barocchismo che, soltanto per alcuni momenti e ad

[93] Così già egli aveva incominciato a giudicare preparando la sua prima antologia di *Lirici marinisti* (Bari, 1910). Cf. la prefazione, "Sensualismo e ingegnosità nella lirica del Seicento" (ora in *Saggi sulla letteratura italiana del Seicento*, Bari, 1911, pp. 353-408), dove precisamente l'ingegnosità che ha così grande importanza in quella produzione, viene giudicata come quella che "non poteva essere arte perchè consisteva in un atto pratico, nella finzione di un pensiero o di un sentimento."

[94] B. Croce, "Categorismo e psicologismo" in *Ultimi Saggi*, p. 376: "Chi più di me si è dato cura di additare e raccogliere le belle pagine di letteratura e di poesia che l'Italia scrisse nell'età barocca, ma che, appunto perchà belle o non erano barocche o avevano ironizzato il barocco o lo avevano altrimenti abbassato a materia o se lo transcinavano dietro como un mal abito o un detrito?"

[95] B. Croce, *Storia dell'età barocca*, p. 32: "Nel Du Bartas c'è serietà, entusiasmo e ingenuità e il suo verseggiare, metaforeggiare ed epitetare è effetto non di vuoto interiore e di giocherellare rettorico, ma di foga oratoria sebbene conforme alle disposizioni sue e del tempo suo." Cf. "Intorno a Guglielmo Du Bartas," *La Critica*, XXVII (1929), 307-316.

[96] *Ibid.*, p. 32.

[97] *Ibid.*, p. 38.

osservatori disattenti, parve nascondere e anche mascherare la più certa bellezza poetica, sottraendole l'attenzione, la lode, e la giusta considerazione. Per gli stessi autori poi che quella maniera, per vigore di temperamento e profondità d'ispirazione, seppero dominare e superare, come non vedere che quanto nelle loro opere ancora reca i segni di questa lotta vittoriosa non può essere essenziale e meno che mai caratteristico della loro intima originalità artistica? Direi che in questa distinzione tra la vera essenza di una poesia e quanto con essa si può frammischiare per facile accondiscendenza a un gusto e a una maniera; proprio in tale indispensabile distinzione il Croce dimostrò l'utilità dei suoi principî teorici applicati criticamente con assoluto rigore di metodo.[98] Nè migliore esempio poteva essere offerto a quanti nel passato e nel presente, desiderosi di tutto rivalutare tanto in Corneille o in Racine come nei compositori minori, andavano segnalando una preferenza comune e generale di alcuni modi espressivi senza avvertire che, oltre quelle eccessive ricerche tecniche, era doveroso indicare in tante opere significative le ben più sicure testimonianze poetiche. E valgano, a questo proposito, due esempi significativi. Quando il nostro critico affronta le grandezze artistiche di Corneille e di Racine, non altri problemi egli si pone se non quelli essenziali. Volendo di quella poesia non già "ritrarre sensibilmente l'impressione suscitata" ma "intenderla e ragionarla,"[99] egli meditatamente giudica il Corneille poeta delle situazioni volitive[100] e il Racine poeta della passione nella sua voluttà e nel suo tormento.[101] Quindi esamina le espressioni più altamente riuscite di questi originali sentimenti. Ma, ben lontano dal cercare nei due artisti l'esistenza di altri possibili caratteri poetici, il critico, per meglio lumeggiare quella grandezza, unica nelle sue attraenti varietà, si preoccupa pure di indicare i tentativi e i fallimenti subiti e patiti nell'ardua conquista del libero canto.[102] Per Corneille denunzia la meccanicità della costruzione teatrale;[103] per Racine la non assoluta necessità

[98] Ma non senza la necessaria finezza, come quando, a proposito del poeta di *Athalie*, osserva (*Ariosto, Shakespeare e Corneille*, 3ª ed., Bari, 1944, p. 272): "... il Racine è sempre squisito e non permette verso di sè procedimenti rozzi di separazione tra poetico e non poetico."

[99] *Ibid.*, p. 265.

[100] *Ibid.*, p. 251.

[101] *Ibid.*, p. 270.

[102] La stessa fondamentale distinzione è applicata ai barocchisti italiani e al Góngora la cui opera è così acutamente giudicata (*La poesia*, p. 247): "Che poi in questa maniera del Góngora ci sia non già un mistero, val mettere in rilievo non un ulteriore carattere e profondamente poetico, del Góngora ma quell'elemento barocco e non poetico che in lui operava accanto alla squisita poetica fantasia e che, per l'unione che ne nasceva di genialità e di artificio, dà ragione del misto sentimento di riprovazione e di attrattiva, suscitato dalla seconda maniera del suo poetare."

[103] B. Croce, *Ariosto, Shakespeare e Corneille*, pp. 240-250.

vitale di alcune azioni e di alcuni personaggi.[104] Qui, proprio in queste debolezze di struttura e di concepimento, per il venir meno della forza ispiratrice, i due poeti non raggiungono la loro originalità e cadono nella maniera. Così Corneille, il poeta che aveva pur tratto non pochi elementi del suo ideale eroico da "tutti quei volumi dai barocchi frontespizi istoriati che allora vedevano la luce in ogni parte d'Europa,"[105] cede ai "diletti . . . per l'abilità e per gli espedienti e le ingegnosità, per il bel favellare cortigiano, per certi gesti di moda, per le galanterie da romanzi pastorali ed eroici, per le punte, per le antitesi, pei madrigali."[106] E Racine, nei personnaggi costruiti ma non creati, dimentica "le parole semplici" e più frequentemente ricorre al "linguaggio madrigalesco, fiorito, galante e cortigiano."[107] Barocchismo di Corneille e di Racine? Certamente, poichè il termine ritrova qui il suo pieno significato, sintetizzando dei due poeti tutte le debolezze.

Se, per completare questa rapida storia dei contributi della cultura europea alla identificazione di una età barocca nella letteratura francese, mi proponessi ora di precisare quale delle concezioni qui indicate o quale autore ed opera più efficacemente influì sugli studiosi francesi, rendendoli consapevoli della necessità di rivedere uno degli schemi storiografici più cari alla loro mentalità, certamente l'imbarazzo sarebbe grande. Ho già detto che la teoria di E. d'Ors fu spiegata dallo stesso autore e discussa a Pontigny. Inoltre, l'interpretazione critica di A. Boase che pure si lamentò pubblicamente per quanti anni le sue scoperte furono trascurate, trovò larga ospitalità nelle stesse riviste francesi. Persino la negligenza, talvolta ostentata, per la cultura tedesca o la difficoltà di assimilare l'attività critica italiana[108] vennero superate ogni qualvolta una meditata interpretazione riproponeva il problema con nuove soluzioni. Ma, anche ammettendo questi fatti, nessuna tendenza e nessun autore mi sembrano aver agito in modo assoluto o per lo meno predominante. Aperta come non mai ad ogni corrente, forse per rispetto ad un comparatismo che in Francia vanta illustri rappresentanti, la critica francese reagì in modi molto diversi tutte le volte che da qualche parte le veniva proposto il concetto di barocco e la sua applicazione letteraria. Nè si dimentichi che, nel nostro caso, reazione

---

104 *Ibid.*, p. 272.

105 *Ibid.*, p. 231.

106 *Ibid.*, p. 249.

107 *Ibid.*, p. 272.

108 Si veda, a questo proposito, l'opera di Bruce A. Morrissette, *Les Aspects fondamentaux de l'esthétique symboliste* (Clermont-Ferrand, 1933), dove si cerca di stabilire l'influenza dell'estetica crociana su quella francese. Come giustamente osservò l'interessato (*La poesia*, p. 256) si tratta di punti di contatto puramente negativi. Per altro anche S. Solmi ("Valéry teorico e critico" in *La salute di Montaigne e altri scritti di letteratura francese*, Firenze, 1949, pp. 80-106) ha cercato di fissare con più acume, qualche somiglianza, ma prudentemente, senza in alcun modo insistervi (p. 85).

precisamente significa lenta assimilazione. Poichè, superato ormai nei decenni del nuovo secolo il pregiudizio classico, il campo si offriva aperto a tutte le arditezze e alle loro inevitabili opposizioni. Le une e le altre si vennero gradatamente inscrivendo in un processo storico che è la testimonianza significativa di un nuovo passo compiuto dalla cultura francese.

Università di Genova

FAIRFAX'S TASSO

CHARLES G. BELL

THE sixteenth-century phase of the Renaissance does not arrive in the north of Europe at the smooth harmonious ripeness which distinguishes it in Italy. There it has other values. It begins as a lively birth in the secular expansion of late Gothic. Into this native life the Italian and revived classical are absorbed, often through the medium of translations. In the organic interplay and quickening that ensues, style tendencies assert themselves, apparently contradictory, yet working together towards the seventeenth-century maturation. There is an "aureate" exuberance, a lavishness of emotion, image, and decorative detail; yet within this dynamic extravagance, an antithetical core of rounded harmony is formed.[1]

Of course, the classical modulation of form and shadowed mood, the antithesis and controlled voweling of sound, which the seventeenth century admired, were not perfected until Waller "began to essay." Waller played a critical role in this formulation; and, as almost every literary historian since Dryden has remarked, it was from Fairfax's *Godfrey of Bulloigne* that he professed to derive "the Harmony of his Numbers."[2] It would take another long article to establish the place of Fairfax in the transformation of English verse. But many things of importance to that investigation emerge from a study of the *Godfrey* in its own right. For this translation, apart from its worth as an English poem, has the greatest historical interest. It represents a masterpiece of the Italian late Renaissance (anticipating the classical-baroque), brought over, not only into English, but into the style complex and vigor of the northern sixteenth century. Yet, even in this transformation and excess, it bears the germ of classical restraint, a style balance and well-voweled dignity, which were to prove decisive in the evolution of English verse. We examine it here both for its innate beauty and as a document of cultural change.

Of Fairfax himself, we need only say, for purposes of reference, that

[1] There has been a tendency of late to call all this Renaissance and even late Gothic profusion baroque. This is not the place to take up that gauntlet. It is enough to say that I am not following the Wölfflin boundaries of baroque, but those of more recent art historians (de Tolnay, Benesch, etc.), and that the whole expansive phase of literature (as of music and the arts) down to about 1600 in Italy and about 1625 in the North is here called late Renaissance. The baroque, with its absorbed antithesis, the heroic classical, I take as essentially a phenomenon of the seventeenth century, with the rational and emotional formulation, the volitional heightening, and the histrionic contrast it involves.

[2] See Dryden, *Preface to the Fables* (1700); cf. also the preface to the eighth edition of Waller's poems (1711).

he was born, perhaps in Leeds, between about 1560 and 1575, an illegitimate son of Sir Thomas Fairfax.[3] He died, it would seem, in 1635 at Newhall, Yorkshire. The *Godfrey,* translated during the closing years of the sixteenth century, was first published in 1600; from this time on the retiring poet, though constantly given to study and writing, did not again court public favor. As a result most of the "learned and beautiful Eclogues," written in 1603, have perished, the "History of Edward the Black Prince" (presumably metrical) is not to be traced, and even the *Daemonologia,* clearly written as a popular tract, did not find its way into print until the nineteenth century.

But in the *Godfrey of Bulloigne* we possess a work which has been known and generally admired since 1600.[4] Charles Knight, editor of one of the two 1817 editions, has called it the finest translation in our language, a judgment in which Saintsbury and Douglas Bush, among later critics, seem to concur. Certainly, of all verse translations of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, this is the smoothest in versification, the most profound in influence, and probably the most finely poetic.

The general qualities of translation in the period have been skillfully studied by the late F. O. Matthiessen in his *Translation, an Elizabethan Art* (Cambridge, Mass., 1931). Though he considers only five translations in prose, his conclusions can be more widely applied. As in late Renaissance art, architecture, and music, whether in England or the Low Countries, there is a blending of the formal perfection and decorative richness of the matured Italian and revived classical with the sturdy boisterous energy of the North. The result in the visual arts is northern mannerism, a style once condemned (as the name implies), now championed and admired. In the translations a parallel manneristic tendency reveals itself in a heightening of the emotions and contrasts, a sense of activity and movement—a leaning that is verbally shown in the employment of a picturesque and colorful idiom. Simple generalized statements are replaced by racy concrete equivalents. There is a love of proverbial addition and homely allusion. The novelty of Renaissance decoration in the highly euphuistic vein is cultivated with such assiduity that the copy becomes as a rule more florid than the original. This effect is to be observed both in the decorative *material*—where classical references and embellishments are thrown in wholesale—and in the decorative *language*—where for a single word lively doublets or, at times, whole Ra-

[3] See my article, "Edward Fairfax, a Natural Son," *Modern Language Notes,* LXII (1947), 24-27.

[4] See my article, "A History of Fairfax Criticism," *PMLA,* LXII (1947), 644-656.

belaisian piles of synonyms are employed. The virtue of such translations is the vigorous individuality of their style; their weaknesses are a common failure to reproduce the matter before them and at times a tendency to fall, through excessive licence, into the grotesque or absurd. Matthiessen has given examples from the prose translations of these faults and virtues; we shall hereafter educe several from Fairfax's *Godfrey*.

All this would seem to indicate that the translators of the period were free rather than literal and that, in their eagerness to achieve a new creation, they dealt capriciously with their originals. This, however, is not wholly true. The tendencies noted above are superimposed upon a tradition of literalness which dates from the early years of the century. The translating freedom increases as the Renaissance ripens (note the progression from Hoby to Florio); but even the latest of the Elizabethan translators—when compared with their successors of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—are conservative in the employment of paraphrase. They make in a sense floreate "variations on a ground," but the "ground" is always basically maintained. The men of the seventeenth century on the contrary, while eschewing the elaborations of Renaissance filigree, rationalize translation into a process of emotional re-creation, a new variation in which the original is consistently transposed in harmony and mode.[5] We may trace a continuous evolution in the theory of translation from the time of the northern humanists (e.g., Cheke, Wilson, Grimald), who believe in plain and strict literalness, to the mid-seventeenth century, when Sir John Denham writes:

> I conceive it a vulgar error in translating Poets, to affect being *Fidus Interpres;* let that care be with them who deal in matters of Fact, or matters of Faith; but whosoever aims at it in Poetry, as he attempts what is not required, so shall he never perform what he attempts; for it is not his business alone to translate Language into Language, but Poesie into Poesie; and Poesie is of so subtile a spirit, that in pouring out of one Language into another, it will all evaporate, and if a new spirit be not added in the transfusion, there will remain nothing but a *Caput mortuum* . . . and whosoever offers at Verbal Translation, shall have the misfortune of that young Traveller, who lost his own language abroad, and brought home no other instead of it.[6]

[5] The parallel evolution of the variation or division form in music should be noted.

[6] The Earl of Roscommon in his famous *Essay on Translated Verse* (1684)—though he seems more dedicated to the cause of literalness than Denham (he condemns, for example, "excursions" or wanderings from the text: "*Excursions* are *inexpiably* Bad, For 'tis much safer to leave out, than *Add*")—still in many places makes it clear that he recommends poetic paraphrase rather than pedantic word-for-word following:

> "Words in One Language Elegantly us'd,
> Will hardly in another be excus'd . . .
> The *Genuine Sence*, intelligibly Told,
> Shews a *Translator* both *Discreet*, and *Bold*."

And in this Dryden (Preface to *Sylvae*, 1685) confesses to have followed him:

This is said of poetry; the same tendency, though perhaps less extreme, may be traced in prose—certainly through the Elizabethan era. Midway in this progression comes Fairfax, in whom the literal foundation of the theoretical humanists supports those manneristic inventions of Elizabethan fancy—the whole prefiguring, however, in many respects, the statelier reasoned structure of seventeenth-century re-creative translation.

Edward Phillips, a typical seventeenth-century critic, commended Fairfax not only for the excellence of his version but also for his "choise of so worthily extolled a Heroic Poet as *Torquato Tasso*." In this single fact we have the key to much of Fairfax's seventeenth-century effectiveness. Where Harington, for instance, by choosing Ariosto linked himself to the Gothic fiction and multiple structure of the past, Fairfax by his choice of Tasso allied himself with the reasoned restraint and heroic fullness of the future. Fairfax has not told us what motive prompted him in this selection. From his translation we may infer that he loved the poet, and that his native genius inclined him to such rich late Renaissance effects as the *Gerusalemme liberata* affords. Moreover, translation was in the air, and the opportunity which Tasso offered must have been clear to all. Translations in *ottava rima* were not uncommon. Harington's *Ariosto* had first appeared in 1591. In 1594 Richard Carew published a version of the first five cantos of Tasso, to which we must shortly return. In 1598 we note *Orlando innamorato. The three first Bookes . . . done into English heroical verse by R. T.*[7] And finally Spenser, while altering the stanza form, had liberally employed passages from the Italians, translating whole scenes closely from Tasso.[8]

Fairfax proceeded in the general manner of these authors, beginning with a strict base of literalness (especially at the opening of each stanza), then aureately transfiguring his original as metrical exigencies and the promptings of imagination led him. But in the particular use of this method he is distinctive. A contrast with Harington is revealing. Harington is at the same time less and more literal. He drops whole

"Yet with all, I must acknowledge, that I have many times exceeded my Commission; for I have both added and omitted and even sometimes very boldly made such expositions of my Authors, as no *Dutch* Commentator will forgive me." These individual additions Dryden justifies by saying that, if the author "were living, and an *Englishman*, they are such as he wou'd probably have written."

[7] This was Robert Tofte, a poet who in this little-known work showed himself a competent translator, a better master of smooth verse than Harington, though by no means a match for Fairfax.

[8] Of these authors Fairfax was most influenced by Spenser, to whom he shows his constant debt. That he knew Harington well is attested by several passages in the eclogues which derive from the English not the Italian Ariosto. To the Boiardo we can trace no obligation. The question of whether Fairfax knew Carew's *Tasso* will be discussed later.

verses, condenses others violently. Only a few books contain as many stanzas as the original; for an extreme, Book XVIII is cut in half, with much good matter omitted.[9] This Fairfax never does, but translates stanza for stanza, often line for line. On the other hand, Harington's imagination does not take fire as does that of Fairfax; he adds less to his text that is distinctively new; the words and comparisons are less often his own. In this sense he is closer to his source. The two translator's comparative skill of versification is really not our concern here. Yet it may be observed in passing that Harington's verse is rough and cramped (though often of real vividness), and had already before its publication been rendered archaic by the achievement of Spenser. Fairfax, on the contrary, refines on Spenser, so that in his *Godfrey* the seventeenth-century lovers of "smooth verse" found "much more Musick than in the *Fairy Queen.*"[10] Harington wrote (XXXVIII, 77):

> Now when Aurora left the lothed bed
> Of Tytan (unto whom she hath no lust).

As sensuous ornament this is wretched stuff. And this was after Spenser had written (I, ii, 7):

> Now when the rosy-fingred Morning faire,
> Weary of aged *Tithones* saffron bed,
> Had spread her purple robe through deawy aire,
> And the high hils Titan discouered.

Fairfax with perhaps more smoothness copied Spenser:

> The rosie fingred morne with gladsome ray
> Rose to her taske from old Tithonus' lap.[11]

S. W. Singer[12] then is not without justification when he objects to Hume's linking of Harington with Fairfax:[13] "This immediate transition from Fairefax to the rugged Harington is a proof how little attention Hume could have bestowed on the subject, or else a manifestation that he had a very defective ear."

That Fairfax employed the first five books of Tasso as rendered by Richard Carew (1594) in making his own translation has been denied,[14] though in my opinion without convincing proof. The passages in which we are told that Fairfax mistakes Tasso's meaning, where Carew might have directed him, seem to me more obviously intentional changes

---

[9] The 192 stanzas are reduced to 95.

[10] Preface to the eighth edition of Waller's poems, 1711.

[11] *Godfrey*, XV, 1, where Tasso had written only:

> "Già richiamava il bel nascente raggio
> A l'opre ogni animal ch'in terra alberga."

[12] Preface to the *Godfrey* reprint of 1817.

[13] *The History of England* (1785), VI, 193.

[14] *Retrospective Review*, III (1821), 36.

of a sort we shall discover to be characteristic of Fairfax. As for the concluding lines of II, 40, offered as final evidence,

> Seguí le guerre; e 'n quelle, e fra le selve
> Fèra a gli uomini parve, uomo a le belve,

which Fairfax replaces by

> The satyres tough, the fawnes and fairies wilde
> She chased oft, oft took, and oft beguilde,

they contain in the Italian the sort of compact turgidity that Fairfax always avoids. The Carew version might well have warned him against literal translation, rather than directing him to it:

> The warre ensewes in which, and in forreasts
> Men, savage her, man, her deeme savage beasts.

This is more obscure than the Italian, even for an English reader. Besides, there is an almost sure indication of Fairfax's use of Carew in IV, 1, where for

> Contra i cristiani i lividi occhi torse,

Carew writes:

> His wannish eyes doth on the Christians cast.

The fine adjective *wannish* for *lividi* reappears in Fairfax:

> His wannish eies upon them bent askance.

In this connection it is worth observing that a copy of Carew's translation (Italian and English parallel texts) appears in the "Catalogue of the Entire and Valuable Library of the Honourable Bryan Fairfax Esq" (Bodl. Misc. Bibl. III 8 41), as sold in 1756. It is probable that many of the books of Bryan Fairfax came originally from the library of his great-uncle, Edward, the poet,[15] who may have used this volume.

At any rate, the contrast of Richard Carew with Fairfax is an interesting one. Carew is attempting to work in the strict literal tradition of the early humanists, striving at the same time for meter, rime, and exact sense; as a result, he falls into many clumsy absurdities. One example, from IV, 38, will serve to illustrate, where hundreds could be found. We are told by Tasso that Eustace led Armida to the place where Godfrey sat. Carew in groping for a rime renders:

> He ends, and guides her where good Bulleyn stald
> Twixt Worthies great.[16]

Fairfax, on the other hand, translates with creative freedom, following his original except where the decoration or smoothness of his verse is at stake, then varying the Italian to suit his needs.

---

[15] Bryan had, for example, the annotated MS of the Fairfax eclogues.

[16] This may also illustrate in part the ludicrous extreme of that tendency to vigorous homely language which we have mentioned as characterizing northern translations.

The great fault of such license, naturally, is that it substitutes the judgment of the translator for that of the original author, and in transforming may spoil a poem. Where it bestows a new life, it takes away an old (though in Carew the old was already sufficiently extinct). It is for this reason that Hartley Coleridge in his *Northern Worthies* says: "Fairfax was, it must be confessed, an unfaithful translator, who, if he sometimes expanded the germ of his author to a bright consummate flower, just as often spoiled what he was trying to improve." Yet it is through his freedom that Fairfax attains in many passages a poetic beauty Carew is never able to approach and that in all cases is saved the stiff artificiality of pedantic literalness.[17]

Fairfax has an artificiality of his own, and in several spots an absurdity equal to the instance quoted from Carew; but the cause will be found the reverse of that which accounts for the artificiality in Carew. Fairfax wanders from his text and grows foolish; Carew abides foolish in the pursuit of his. The following stanza (III, 46), for example, can only be called parody in Fairfax's rendering:

> Three times he strove to view heav'ns golden ray,
> And rais'd him on his feeble elbow thrise,
> And thrise he tumbled on the lowly lay,
> And three times clos'd againe his dying eies,
> He speakes no word, yet makes he signes to pray,
> He sighes, he faints, he grones, and then he dies.

This might be appropriate for the burlesque death of a pagan clown, but in an epic poem, and of a Christian hero, it is scarcely the thing. Tasso, however, is natural enough, with only the germ of this "multiple three" gesture.

There are other instances of the same thing. In V, 85, Tasso tells us that Godfrey's "mind was grieved"; Fairfax, trying to heighten and vivify this, makes the grand leader of the Christian army cry like a child:

> For which he sigh'd all day, and wept all night.

When Tasso makes a man do a thing "without standing in doubt," Fairfax has him "laugh and skip" for eagerness (VII, 102); and, without any foundation in the Italian, Fairfax described Godfrey's battle speech in this manner:

---

[17] This is well expressed in an article in the *Retrospective Review*, III (1821), 36: "In Fairfax's translation, though, when compared with more modern attempts, it is abundantly faithful, we frequently find him varying from the strict sense of the original, while at the same time we feel loth to blame him for wandering, when his aberrations lead us along such beautiful ways. Carew follows his prototype step by step, carefully placing his feet in the very print of Tasso's, which necessarily gives him an appearance of constraint and difficulty. He adheres as much too religiously to his great original as Pope and the translators of his school have been too free."

So from his lips his words and speeches fell,
Shrill, speedy, pleasant, sweet, and placed well.[18]

But such indiscretions are not numerous—we have already quoted the worst of them—and they cannot at all balance the verbal obscurities of Carew. We must remember that these quotations are selections from a long poem, and that (in keeping with the paradox we have noted) Fairfax is, on the whole, not a capricious, but a faithful translator. Although his *Godfrey* cannot everywhere merit the praise the historian, Hume, gives it ("Each line in the original is faithfully rendered by a correspondent line in the translation"),[19] yet for many stanzas together this testimony will be found true. It is hard to conceive a better translation of Rinaldo's overcoming of the enchantments of the forest than Fairfax has given us in Book XVIII. The whole account is true to the Italian, yet is filled with such new poetic fervor and given such original life that, comparing stanza by stanza with Tasso, it would be difficult to call the translation inferior to the original—certainly to see how in any part it could be improved, in either fidelity or beauty. All the beginning of Book IV is rendered with a similar truth and excellence. So too is the description of Rinaldo's seduction (Book XIV), which Spenser had translated more freely in his Bower of Bliss canto (*Faerie Queene*, II, xii) and from whom Fairfax derives a wonderful richness of language without ever forsaking the thought of Tasso. Fairfax's battle scenes are performed not only with extreme vigor, but with accuracy.[20] He has rendered closely passages of all kinds, from the absolute simplicity of this:

Emmaüs is a citie small, that lies
From Sions wals distant a little way;
A man that early on the morne doth rise,
May thither walke ere the third houre of day
(II, 56)

deriving from Tasso's

Emäús è città cui breve strada
Da la regal Gierusalem disgiunge;
Ed uom che lento a suo diporto vada,
Se parte matutino, a nona giunge;

[18] Compare the similar heightenings of which Matthiessen has given examples: Hoby's "untowardly asseheads" for "sciocchi" (p. 43); or Florio's "that doth not bumbast his labours with high-swelling and heaven-disembowelling words" for Montaigne's "qui n'enfle des mots" (p. 39).

[19] Contrast the statement by Hartley Coleridge, quoted above. Neither is utterly to be cast aside. They rather define poles of the literal-creative tension in which Fairfax labors.

[20] IX, 68 is an exception; the Tasso is here made ridiculous:

"Her sword through Berengario's brest she thrust,
Quite through his hart where life doth chiefly bide...
Even in the mouth she smote Alhinus than,
And cut in twaine the visage of the man."

to the violence of this storm passage:

> Heav'ns glorious lampe wrapt in an uglie vaile
> Of shadowes darke, was hid from mortall eie,
> And hel's grim blackness did bright skies assaile,
> On everie side the fierie light'nings flie,
> The thunders roare, the streaming raine and haile
> Powre downe, and make that sea which earst was drie.
> The tempests rend the Oakes and Cedars brake,
> And make not trees, but rocks and mountaines shake.
> (VII, 116)

for the Italian:

> Dagli occhi de' mortali un negro velo
> Rapisce il giorno, e 'l sole, e par ch' avvampi
> Negro via piú ch'orror d'inferno il cielo,
> Cosí fiammeggia in fra baleni e lampi.
> Fremono i tuoni; e pioggia accolta in gelo
> Si versa, e i paschi abbatte, e inonda i campi.
> Schianta i rami il gran turbo, e par che crolli
> Non pur le querce, ma le ròcche e i colli.

That Fairfax knew the value of literalness and sometimes worked to obtain it, his three versions of the first stanza of *Godfrey* adequately prove. The Italian is:

> Canto l'arme pietose e'l Capitano
> Che 'l gran sepolcro liberò di Cristo:
> Molto egli oprò co 'l senno e con la mano:
> Molto soffrì nel glorioso acquisto;
> E in van l'Inferno vi s'oppose, e in vano
> S'armò d'Asia e di Libia il popol misto;
> Il Ciel gli diè favore, e sotto a i santi
> Segni ridusse i suoi compagni erranti.

The first rendering that we have of this stanza, appearing in the normal first editions of *Godfrey,* runs:

> The sacred armies, and the godly knight
> That the great sepulcher of Christ did free,
> I sing; much wrought his valour and foresight,
> And in that glorious war much suffred hee.
> In vaine gainst him did hell oppose her might,
> In vaine the Turke and Morians armed bee,
> His souldiers wilde (to braules and mutines prest)
> Reduced he to peace, so heav'n him blest.

Fairfax evidently disapproved of the roughness of this, so he tried again, producing a version that is certainly finer and in several places, particularly in the third line, closer to the Italian. This new stanza is pasted over the old in some copies of the first edition:

> I sing the warre made in the Holy land,
> And the great chiefe that Christ's great tombe did free
> Much wrought he with his wit, much with his hand,

Much in that brave atchievement suff'red hee;
In vain doth hell that man of God withstand,
In vain the world's great princes armed be;
For heav'n him favour'd; and he brought againe
Under one standard all his scatter'd traine.

But he evidently did not consider it perfect. In *Notes and Queries,* II, 377, appears a third variant, taken from a reprinted first leaf.[21] Here Fairfax follows his original almost word for word:

I sing the sacred armies, and the knight
That Christ's great tomb enfranchised and set free.
Much wrouht he by his witte, much by his might,
Much in that glorious conquest suff'red he:
Hell hindered him in vaine; in vaine to fight
Asia's and Affrick's peoples armed be;
Heav'n favour'd him; his lords and knights misgone,
Under his ensigns he reduc'd in one.

If we read on to the second stanza, we shall find it too carefully patterned on the Italian:

O heavenly muse, that not with fading baies
Deckest thy brow by th' Heliconian spring,
But sittest crown'd with stars immortall raies,
In heaven where legions of bright Angels sing,
Inspire life in my wit, my thoughts upraise,
My verse ennoble, and forgive the thing,
If fictions light I mixe with truth divine,
And fill these lines with others praise then thine.[22]

But Tasso is scarcely more poetic:

O Musa, tu che di caduchi allori
Non circondi la fronte in Elicona,
Ma su nel cielo in fra i bëati cori
Hai di stelle immortali aurea corona,
Tu spira al petto mio celesti ardori,
Tu rischiara il mio canto, e tu perdona
S'intesso fregi al ver, s dorno in parte
D'altri diletti, che de' tuoi, le carte.

[21] A correspondent who signs himself "The Hermit of Holyport" publishes this version, copied exactly from a 1600 copy formerly in his possession, but presented to "the late William Wordsworth." He also gives a variant of the Argument to Book One as printed on the same leaf with the third version of the first stanza.

[22] The Carew version is scarcely more accurate than this, though it gives the appearance of being bound:

"O Muse! thou that thy head not compassest
With fading bayes which Helicon doth beare;
But bove in skyes, amids the Quyers blest,
Dost golden crowne of starres imortal weare,
Celestial flames breath thou into my brest,
Enlighten thou my song; and pardon where
I faining weave with truth, and verse with art
Of pleasings deckt, wherein thou hast no part."

If we proceed only a little farther, we shall find changes and elaborations. Since Fairfax could translate so closely and well, we must ask ourselves on what occasions and for what causes does he leave his text to improvise?

The obvious answer is in passages of description and for purposes of adornment. But here too Fairfax is pulled in two directions at once. In one respect he is the smoother of English verse, anticipating the seventeenth-century classical modulation; in another he is a fanciful Elizabethan stirred by all the arabesque enthusiasms of northern "mannerism." Like many of his contemporaries he had not wholly learned the "art to blot." Thus his richest beauties are achieved in the Phaetonian flight which too often leads to disaster. His record, like that of the age, is one of an exuberance that sometimes succeeds greatly and again dismally fails (or sometimes in a triumph of enigma does both in one). When Fairfax succeeds, his poetry has a sonorous richness which already reminds us of Milton:

> Day hath his golden sun, her moone the night,
> Her fixt and wandring stars the azure skie.
> (XVIII, 13)

This is surely closer to the mood of Eve's rhapsody,

> . . . then silent Night
> With this her solemn Bird and this fair Moon,
> And these the Gemms of Heav'n, her starrie train,
> (*Paradise Lost*, IV, 647-9)

than Spenser ever comes. On the other hand, when he fails, he burdens his already rich original with cluttered ornament:

> Her cheekes on which this streaming *Nectar* fell,
> *Still'd through the limbecke of her diamond eies,*
> The roses white and red resembled well,
> Whereon the *roarie May*-deaw sprinkled lies,
> When the faire morne first blusheth from her cell,
> *And breatheth balme from opened paradies;*
> *Thus sigh'd, thus mourn'd, thus wept this lovely queene,*
> *And in each drop, bathed a grace unseene.*
> (IV, 75)

I have italicized the Fairfax additions. Tasso himself was here close to the boundary of bad taste ("baroque," that is, in the usual, but for me false sense); Fairfax has surely overstepped it. And yet we cannot but admire in its own right so superb a phrase as "the roarie May-deaw," which, as it happens, is elsewhere employed in a more pleasing stanza (I, 14, "and shook his wings with roarie May-dews wet").

The decorations Fairfax adds are of many kinds. The classical allusion may be considered first. Tasso, like the late-Renaissance painters of his time, though creating a religious work under conditions of the

Counter Reformation, does not seek to avoid the voluptuous sensuousness of the pagan rebirth. He has shown here no less than in *Aminta* that this is the very core of his creation. He writes:

> Era la notte, e 'l suo stellato velo
> Chiaro spiegava e senza nube alcuna;
> E già spargea rai luminosi e gelo
> Di vive perle la sorgente luna.
> L'innamorata donna iva co 'l cielo
> Le sue fiamme sfogando ad una ad una;
> E secretarii del suo amore antico
> Fea i muti campi e quel silenzio amico.
> (VI, 103)

with a crepuscular and romantic richness far beyond that of Ariosto.[23] This Fairfax has beautifully translated, though with a certain transference of aesthetic and veiled luminosity into sparkling points of brilliance (as especially in line 4):

> Invested in her starrie vaile, the night
> In her kinde armes embraced all this round,
> The silver moone from sea uprising bright
> Spred frostie pearle on the canded ground:[24]
> And *Cinthia* like for beauties glorious light,
> The love-sicke Nymph threw glistering beames around,
> And counsellors of her old love, she made
> Those vallies dumbe, that silence, and that shade.

The last two lines, splendidly realizing the Italian, in a way prefigure the whole Miltonic and classical sensuous achievement.

Tasso's debt to the classical tradition is of course enormous. The whole substance of his poem speaks the absorption of Homer and Virgil. This could not be better indicated than by notes of the Padua edition of 1616, *Il Goffredo overo La Gierusalemme Liberata del Tasso, col Commento del Beni.* Yet, despite this grounding, the poem shows the influence of the Counter Reformation, not only in the restraint of its style, but in the usual avoidance of the decorative pagan allusion. It is astonishing how sparing the *Gerusalemme* is in those open classical references the Elizabethan loved.[25]

Those that appear demonstrate the obvious fact that, had he desired, Tasso could have been as profuse in pagan terms as Fairfax. In I, 58, he writes of Rinaldo:

> Se 'l miri fulminar ne l'arme avvolto,
> Marte lo stimi; Amor se scopre il vólto.

---

[23] Contrast Ariosto's sharper poignance as in Orlando's dream, close of Book VIII.

[24] Fairfax as a northerner makes "pearle" (and similar words) disyllabic.

[25] I have noted these: I, 58; II, 15; II, 39; IV, 86, 96; VI, 23; XVII, 11; XVIII, 30; XIX, 17.

This is so much in the Fairfax vein that, when Fairfax translates it (with the normal additions),

> Armed, a *Mars*, might coyest *Venus* move,
> And if disarm'd, then God himselfe of love,

it becomes one of his most typical passages—one that, if we had not the Italian beside us, we would be sure he had created. Tasso, on several occasions, too, had used pagan allusions in dealing with pagans; thus we find him describing the king of Egypt:

> Apelle forse o Fidia in tal sembiante
> Giove formò; ma Giove allor tonante.
> (XVII, 11)

This too comes naturally from the pen of Fairfax, though he loses the clever turn of thought.

We may say that the root of Fairfax's classical adornment is found in Tasso. It is also noticeable that comparisons appearing in Fairfax were often foreshadowed in the Italian, though from discretion or fear of the Church kept hid. Here again a typical example must suffice. In XIV, 43 an old hermit, telling of his astronomical study, says:

> Ivi spiegansi a me senz'alcun velo
> Venere e Marte in ogni lor sembianza.

Venus and Mars are here but planets; yet there is a subtle force in the "senz'alcun velo." Fairfax makes all of Tasso's implications disruptingly clear:

> There Mars and Venus I behold at will,
> As bare, as earst when Vulcan tooke them short.

Again, what seem added echoes from the classical poets in Fairfax have often their sources in Tasso. Thus in V, 28 Fairfax describes the noise of battle:

> Like rolling waves, and Boreas' angrie blasts,
> When roaring seas against the rocks he casts.

Boreas and the rocks are added for no real reason except that Homer had used them in the passage Tasso was copying, and that Fairfax worked back from Tasso to Tasso's source. One of the best examples of this sort of decoration is in a beautiful stanza in Book II:

> Now spred the night her spangled canopie,
> And sommon'd every restlesse eie to sleepe:
> On beds of tender grasse the beastes downe lie,
> The fishes slumb'red in the silent deepe,
> Unheard was serpents hisse, and dragons crie,
> Birds left to sing, and Philomene to weepe,
> Onely that noise heav'ns rolling circles kest,
> Sung lullabie, to bring the world to rest.
> (II, 96)

The serpent and dragon are not in Tasso; but Tasso was imitating *Aeneid,* IV, 522 ff., and it was there that Fairfax found them. We can only admire the result. Had Fairfax's classical borrowings always produced this musical richness, we could be wholly thankful for them.

Of the pagan allusions appearing in Tasso, Fairfax has omitted two,[26] but he has added nearly fifty[27] to replace them. Some of these are merely substitutions typical of English poetical terminology of that day; others are fully developed classical parallels. Cupid is substituted for love,[28] Phoebus or Titan for the sun,[29] Aeolus or Boreas for the wind,[30] Neptune for the sea,[31] and even Jove for God, something Tasso never dared to do.[32] On some few occasions the allusions in Fairfax which have not even a foundation in the Italian come so fortuitously that we must count them additions to the poem. The close of I, 77 is typical; where Tasso tells us the Christians became guides to Godfrey, Fairfax adorns:

> And were his guides as faithfull from that day
> As Hesperus, that leades the sunne his way.

But too often the allusions have not this element of poetic surprise; they are the standard rhetorical goods, brought forth at the expected time. So a fair virgin is compared to Cynthia (II, 14); a fierce warrior (III, 33) comes down "like angrie Mars"; battle (VII, 63) becomes "Bellona's dreadfull rage"; a battle field (IX, 49), the "slaughter-house of angrie Mars." When Clorinda stands on the walls of Jerusalem with bow and arrows, we are told:

> So fit to shoot Latona's daughter stood,
> When Niobe she killed and all her brood.
> (XI, 28)

When the sun shines hot (XIII, 55), we are reminded of Phaeton; and when two knights find their way through a labyrinth, it is "as Theseus did by Ariadne's line."

Yet even these normal allusions often achieve beauty. The Niobe passage quoted above is an example, while the last two lines of VIII, 32 afford another. They are not in Tasso; they are not unexpected or original, yet they please.

---

[26] A reference to Argus in II, 15 and to Arachne in II, 39.

[27] I have listed 46: I, 15, 17, 61, 73, 77; II, 14, 34, 40, 94; III, 22, 33, 37, 52, 75; IV, 46, 76, 84, 91, 92; V, 66, 86; VI, 8, 28, 40; VII, 19, 57, 63, 99; VIII, 1, 32, 61; IX, 22, 49, 65, 71, 92; XI, 13, 28; XIII, 55; XIV, 43; XV, 14; XVI, 1, 8, 24; XVIII, 12, 85.

[28] This usage is so common I have not tried to count the examples; VI, 73 is typical.

[29] Phoebus: I, 15; II, 47; IV, 84; VII, 19; Titan: IV, 91.

[30] V, 40; VIII, 1; IX, 22.

[31] V, 86; VII, 93.

[32] I, 17.

With that I saw from *Cinthia's* silver face,
Like to a falling star a beame downe slide,
That bright as golden line markt out the place,
And lightned with cleere streames the forrest wide.
So *Latmos* shone when *Phebe* left the chase,
And laid her downe by her *Endimions* side.

That these classical garnerings, however traditional, were popular is proved by the frequent quotation of them in *England's Parnassus*,[33] and by the fact that Waller and other smooth poets closely imitated them.

One of the features of Fairfax's decorative talent is that, whenever he comes to a description of night or day, sunrise or sunset, he grows inspired and soars off on his own wings. This is a tendency his later critics have deplored. But how popular it was at the time we can again demonstrate from *England's Parnassus*. Fairfax is quoted under "Morning" five times,[34] more than any other poet but Spenser, who is quoted the same number. Shakespeare has three passages given, Marlowe two, no other poet more than one. Four descriptions of night are given from Fairfax, more than are allowed to any other writer. This is a striking tribute to the poet's richness, and an indication of what the world admired in him. If we analyze these passages, we will find not a single one that has failed to elaborate and color the Italian. Sometimes, as in XV, 1, he has completely changed the image; sometimes, as in I, 71, he has only altered a part of it, bringing the line,

And bride-groome-like forth stept the glorious sunne,

from Spenser *(Faerie Queene,* I, v, 2) rather than Tasso. Sometimes he has substituted a phrase of his own, as "Iove's high pallace" for the Italian *ciel* (XVIII, 12); more commonly he has added such decorative terms as "purple wings," "golden weed," "morning's lustie queene" (XVIII, 15), etc.

It will be well to look closely at a few of the morning descriptions. In I, 35, for the Italian:

Facea ne l'oriente il sol ritorno,
Sereno e luminoso oltre l'usato,

which we may translate literally,

The sun in the orient made return,
Serene and luminous beyond his custom,

[33] *England's Parnassus: or the choycest flower of our moderne poets, with their poetical comparisons* (London, 1600).

[34] The morning quotations are: "It was the time when gainst the breaking day," etc. (XVIII, 12); "The rosie fingred morne with gladsome ray," etc. (XV, 1); "Aurora bright her cristall gates unbarr'd, And bride-groome-like forth stept the glorious sunne" (I, 71); "The purple morning left her crimson bed," etc. (III, 1); "The golden sun rose from the silver wave, And with his beames enameld everie grene" (I, 35).

and which Fairfax could not have failed to understand, he wrote:

> The golden sunne rose from the silver wave,
> And with his beames ennamel'd every greene.

The tendency will be at once apparent—to add *silver,* and *green,* and *gold,* making morning meet a fixed poetic standard. The Fairfax is undoubtedly beautiful, but it is art of another order than its original. Of course this decoration, as we found true in the case of classical allusions, has its roots in Tasso. We may take the first stanza of Book III as an example of an already rich original given more ornament in translation. For the Italian:

> Giá l'aura messaggera erasi desta,
> A nunziar che se ne vien l'aurora:
> Ella intanto s'adorna, e l'aurea testa
> Di rose còlte in paradiso infiora;

Fairfax has rendered:

> The *purple* morning left her *crimsen bed,*
> And dond her robes of *pure vermilion hew,*
> Her amber locks she crown'd with roses *red,*
> In Edens flowrie gardens gathred new.

He has colored the description and normalized it; he has added *purple* and *crimson* and *vermilion* and *red,* but he has lost the subtler beauty of the Tasso. Yet, even so, only a great poet could have surpassed him here.

The treatment of evening or night is similar to that of morning. In IX, 14 Tasso writes:

> E ne l'ora che par che il mondo reste,
> Fra la notte e fra 'l dí, dubbio e diviso.

Fairfax, not at all satisfied with this, throws in a typically sensational image:

> It was the time, when first the rising night
> Her sparkling diamonds, powreth forth to sell.

We are reminded of the figure of morning in his eclogue, *Eglon and Alexis:*

> Till timely Day-spring with her Morning broom
> Had swept the Silver Motes from Heav'n's Steel-Flore.

Fairfax in keeping with the time had evidently a love for such startlingly original figures. In IX, 65 he has added a similar one, descriptive of the morning sky:

> . . . the lands, his silver sheepe
> Where Hesperus doth leade, doth feed, doth keepe.

The first stanza of Book XIV will illustrate the whole process of dec-

oration (as with morning, on an already decorated original) applied to the coming of night:

> Now from the fresh, the *soft and tender* bed
> Of her *still* mother, *gentle* night out flew
> The *fleeing baulme* on *hils and dales* she shed,
> With *honie drops* of pure and pretious dew,
> And on the verdure of *greene forrests* spred
> The *virgin primrose* and the *violet blew*,
> And *sweet breath'd Zephire* on his spreading wings
> Sleepe, *ease, repose, rest, peace and quiet* brings.

I have again italicized the phrases which are essentially Fairfax's property. In the last line we have an example of another Fairfax trait, which we must soon consider, the love of massed synonyms.

Nor does he confine his decoration to the night and morning passages. He sprinkles it generously, sometimes with such good effect that the English seems more pleasing than the Italian, sometimes so unhappily that we wonder at his lack of critical acumen. It is surely pleasant, for example, when Fairfax tells us:

> The horses ney, and clattring armours sowne,
> Pursue the eccho over dale and downe;
> (I, 73)

where Tasso had said only that the noise deafened the plain. And we feel a distinctly English freshness when we find the Crusaders longing to see the day,

> to heare the larke
> Record her hymnes and chant her carols blest.
> (II, 97)

It does not really disturb us that the line is not from Tasso. Finally, when we come to such a stanza as this descriptive one of the Holy Land,

> By East, among the dustie vallies, glide
> The silver streames of Iordans christall flood;
> By West, the midland sea, with bounders tide
> Of sandie shores, where Ioppa whilome stood,
> (III, 57)

we can only admire the third and fourth lines as fine poetry, without concerning ourselves that many of the details are added to the text. On the other hand, when in two stanzas (I, 58 and 59) we are told that Rinaldo was

> Star of this spheare, the dimond of this ring,
> The nest, where courage with sweet mercie breeds:
> A Comet, worthie each eies wondering,

a "Mars," a "God himselfe of love," and a "pearle," mostly without foundation in the Italian, we wish that Fairfax could have stuck more closely to his original.

It is less the nature of his decorations taken individually that disturbs us than the ever-present consciousness that they will appear. It is when we come to realize that every time hairs are mentioned they will be golden, skin will be ivory, as in this line (I, 60) on Rinaldo,

> Few golden haires to deck his ivory chin;

that waves will be "salt sea billowes" (I, 61); that lovers will be "loves queene and beauties king" (II, 43)—it is then that we feel the weight of these incumbent jewels. Tasso had decorated similarly, as for example in III, 30,

> Fu levissima piaga; e i biondi crini
> Rosseggiaron così d'alquante stille,
> Come rosseggia l'òr che di rubini
> Per man d' illustre artefice sfaville.

> Light was the wound, but through her amber haire
> The purple drops downe railed bloodie red.
> So rubies set in flaming gold appeare,

but never so continuously as Fairfax.

To do our translator justice, however, we must remark that these adornments, most noticeable in the first book or two, fall off in number, and that after Book V we are little troubled with them. The ability to translate with beauty, and yet without wandering far from his text, was a thing Fairfax developed with experience. The decorations with which he at first gaudified the poem are typical of a young, untrained, and abundant mind. Somewhat the same thing appears in *Venus and Adonis*, albeit more finely done. Experience taught Fairfax restraint. As a result we find portions of the *Godfrey* in which there is an admirable combination of literalness with poetic freedom of expression.

What we must admit about Fairfax from the beginning is that he is a different poet from Tasso, and doing a different thing. Though he has his faults, they in turn have their compensations. The color he lays on his canvas often obscures the nobler dignity of Tasso; but as color it is usually delightful. A good example is found in IV, 18:

> Non aspettâr già l'alme a Dio rubelle
> Che fosser queste voci al fin condotte;
> Ma fuor volando a riveder le stelle
> Già se n'uscian da la profonda notte,
> Come sonanti e torbide procelle,
> Che vengan fuor de la natíe lor grotte
> Ad oscurar il cielo, a portar guerra
> A i gran regni del mar e de la terra.

This Fairfax has rendered:

> Before his words the tyrant ended had,
> The lesser devils arose with gastlie rore,
> And thronged foorth about the world to gad,
> Each land they filled, river, streame, and shore;

> The Goblins, Fairies, Feends and Furies mad,
> Ranged in flowrie dales, and mountaines hore,
> And under everie trembling leafe they sit,
> Betweene the solid earth and wekin flit.

We must consider this a loss of power for a gain of liveliness; for the solemn image of a storm, Fairfax has introduced a sprightly piece of Elizabethan fantasy. The truth is, as Denham remarked, that in translating the spirit of poetry evaporates, and unless a new spirit is added we shall have only a dead body. That Fairfax can add a new spirit, a stanza like this well proves:

> It seemed furie, discord, madnes fell
> Flew from his lap, when he unfolds the same,
> His glaring eies with angers venome swell,
> And like the brand of foule *Alecto* flame,
> He lookt like hugh *Tiphoius* loos'd from hell
> Againe to shake heav'ns everlasting frame,
> Or him that built the towre on Shinaar,
> Which threat'neth battel gainst the morning star.
> (II, 91)

The last four lines are nearly original.

Before we turn from a study of these descriptive additions, we should mention a few ideas of exceptional vigor added to the original, which are characteristic of Elizabethan heightening, and of Fairfax at his best: In Book II when the flatterer Aletes is attempting with sweetness to seduce the Christians from their conquests, Fairfax introduces his speech, without basis in the Tasso, as follows:

> And thus he said: (while on the Christian lords
> Down fell the mildew of his sugred words).
> (II, 61)

We could not find a more acute summary of the oration than this. In the description of the assemblage of devils in Hell (IV, 3-7) several vivid additions are made. Where Tasso tells us only that the fiends writhe their tails, Fairfax expands:

> And some their forked tailes stretch forth on hie,
> And teare the twinkling stars from trembling skie.

When the infernal princes enter the hall we have an amusing detail added; they sit, Fairfax tells us,

> On thrones red hot, ibuilt of burning brasse.

But best of all is the description of Satan's face:

> His yawning mouth, that foamed clotted blood
> Gapte like a whirlpoole wide in Stygian flood.

for the Italian (IV, 7)

E in guisa di voragine profonda
S'apre la bocca d'atro sangue immonda.

This illustrates not only the usual heightening of mood but also the strange northern tendency toward the grotesque. We may notice as well the introduction of a supernatural darkness in place of Tasso's natural fall of evening ("perche il giorno spento era omai") in VII, 36. This is a bold stroke, and surely adds to the wonder of Armida's castle. In fact, the whole stanza here seems to me superior to the Tasso:

This said, the day to sable night was turned,
That scant one could anothers armes descrie,
But soone an hundreth lampes and torches burned,
That cleared all the earth and all the skie:
The castell seem'd a stage with lights adorned,
On which men play some pompous tragedie;
Within a tarras sate on high the Queene,
And heard, and saw, and kept her selfe unseene.

Finally, XVIII, 100, the climax of the poem, shows the surge and triumph of Fairfax's verse when he is building a new structure on the foundation of Tasso:

About his head *he tost*, he turn'd, *he cast*
That glorious ensigne, with a thousand twines,
Thereon the winde breathes with his sweetest blast,
Thereon with golden raies *glad Phebus* shines,
Earth laughes for joy, the streames forbeare their hast,
Floods clap their hands, on mountaines dance the pines,
And Sions towres and sacred temples smile,
For their deliv'rance from that bondage vile.[35]

The italics again indicate Fairfax's additions.

We must here look for a moment at another sort of addition characteristic of Fairfax, that of a word or phrase suggested, almost subconsciously, by some sound in the Italian. Such passages have been called mistranslations, whereas in truth they are no more than intentional changes. They are of interest, however, in showing with what openness of mind and creative freedom Fairfax set to work. The most remarkable occurs in III, 32, where the commonest inflection of the familiar verb

[35] For the sake of contrast, I append the corresponding verses from Hoole's translation. They are more literal in word, but in spirit completely unlike the Tasso:

"The conqu'ring banner, to the breeze unroll'd,
Redundant streams in many a waving fold:
The winds with awe confess the heav'nly sign.
With purer beams the day appears to shine:
The swords seem bid to turn their points away,
And darts around it innocently play:
The sacred mount the purple cross adores,
And Sion owns it from her topmost tow'rs."

volgere, which he has here and elsewhere translated correctly, suggests to Fairfax the name of a great river; for the Italian:

> Tal gran tauro talor ne l'ampio agone,
> *Se volge il corno* a i cani ond'è seguito,
> S'arretran essi; e s' a fuggir si pone
> Ciascun ritorna a seguitarlo ardito,

he gives us:

> As the swift Ure by Volgaes rolling flood
> Chas'd through the plaines the mastiffe curres toforne,
> Flies to the succour of some neighbor wood,
> And often *turnes againe his* dreadfull *horne*
> Against the dogs imbru'd in sweat and blood,
> That bite not, till the beast to fight retorne.

Here is no blunder at all. In II, 40, which has been discussed above from a different point of view, the case is more doubtful. It has been suggested that he mistook the meaning of *fèra* for *faivies.*[36] I cannot think this probable; in any event, he could not have mistaken the passage as completely as he has written it. I rather suspect that his new conclusion, surely a pleasing one, was suggested by the sound of *fèra,* and adopted because he preferred it to the Italian. In III, 29, we have a similar instance, where Fairfax tells us:

> But Tancred cride, Oh stay thy cursed hand.

In the Italian we find only:

> Ma Tancredi gridò (ché se n'accòrse),
>
> But Tancred cried out, being grieved by it.

The word *accòrse* must have suggested Fairfax's *cursed.* Similarly, in IV, 29, the introduction of the Praxitilean Aphrodite at the close was almost surely inspired by Tasso's untranslated mention of the island of Cyprus just before; and the mention of kissing at the close of III, 20 may have been suggested by *preme,* from *premere,* to press or squeeze. These examples should suffice to show that Fairfax has often let the faintest suggestion from either the sound or meaning of his text work in his fancy and color whole lines and stanzas.

Along with his other insertions Fairfax has introduced a grand wealth of proverbs, moral observations, and generalized remarks. Lines from III, 10 will give an abstract of the process:

> Up, up, to armes, *for valiant hart despiseth*
> *The threat'ned storme of death,* and danger neere;
> Behold your foes; then further thus deviseth,
> Haste, haste, *for vaine delay encreaseth feare.*

[36] *Retrospective Review,* III, 32. And Singer concurs (*Godfrey,* 1817 ed., Introduction, p. ix).

Similarly, we have a use of the oldest proverbial sentences:

> For steed once stolne, we shut the door too late (II, 77)
>
> Nor rampier can withstand a courage stout (III, 50)
>
> The harder worke deserves the greater hire (III, 51)
>
> For nature fram'd all women to be wonne (II, 15)

We also hear of the snake in the grass (IV, 45) and of the adder that stops her ears from charms (IV, 47). Fairfax's common practice with such insertions is to place them at the ends of stanzas, to complete the couplet and round off his matter.[37]

This sententiousness, inherent in Fairfax as in other Elizabethans, has little foundation in Tasso.[38] It is more common in the first part of the translation than in the last; Fairfax as he proceeded tended to discard it, along with his profuse decorations and allegorical passages. The chief significance of this generalized ending is the seventeenth-century balance Fairfax gives it, a quality of great importance in connection with his influence on Waller.

The learned allusions that Fairfax, with his habitual love of knowledge, has added to the poem belong to a study of the learning of the poet. Here it will suffice to quote a few examples of such elaboration. Where Tasso (I, 72) says the soldiers armed, Fairfax, anxious to show that he knows all types of armor, old and new, translates:

> Some shirts of maile, some coats of plate put on
> Some don'd a curace, some a corslet bright,
> An hawberke some, and some a haberion.

Where Tasso writes (I, 79),

> Geme il vicino mar sotto l'incarco
> De l'alte navi e de' piú lievi pini,

---

[37] Numerous examples could be cited:

> "... yet vouchsafe to frame
> Your thoughts to ours, and lend this virgin aid:
> *Thanks are halfe lost, when good turnes are delaid.*"
> (IV, 78)
>
> "Thus with false hope their longing harts she fired,
> *For hardest gotten things, are most desired.*"
> (IV, 89)
>
> "And kept as slaves, by which we fitly prove,
> *That witlesse pitie breedeth fruitlesse love.*"
> (IV, 90)
>
> "Thou wilt procure us helpe divine, *so reapes*
> *He, that sowes godly sorrow, ioy by heapes.*"
> (III, 69)
>
> "Whose yeelding breakes the strokes thereon which light,
> *So weakenes oft subdues the greatest might.*"
> (XI, 40)

[38] Generalization sometimes hovers over the close of Tasso's stanzas, as in IV, 90—or the invocation of love, IV, 92; "e d'ogni tempo egualmente mortali / vengon da te le medicine e i mali"; but this is quite different from the sententiousness of Fairfax.

Fairfax determines to cover the sea with assorted boats:

> Great Neptune grieved underneath the load
> Of ships, hulks, gallies, barks and brigandines.

In II, 51, when Clorinda tells the King of Juda to let Ismen "try all his incantations," Fairfax is able to display his knowledge of the occult:

> Let Ismen with his squares and trigons war,
> His weapons be the staffe, the glasse, the ring.

In the same way, in XIV, 44, he impresses us with his astronomy:

> How comate, crinite, caudate starres are fram'd,

where Tasso has only

> Scorgo comete e fochi altri sí presso.

Like the proverbs, these learned catalogues occur commonly at a stanza's close.

Also added are exotic allusions, such as to the trees with which Indians take wild elephants (II, 72), or to the Moors' strange form of tennis (III, 32). Biblical allusions are also plentiful in the English poem, though scarce in the Italian. Many of these increase the dignity of effect, and may be considered worthy additions. Examples are XIII, 56,

> As from a furnace flew the smoake to skies,
> *Such smoake as that when damned Sodome brent;*

and XIII, 75,

> A sodaine cloud, *as when Helias praid,*
> (Not from drie earth exhail'd by *Phebus'* beames)
> Arose, moist heav'n his windowes open laid,
> Whence cloudes by heapes out-rush, and watrie streames.
> The world ore spread was with a gloomie shade,
> That like a darke and mirksome ev'n it seemes;
> The dashing raine, from molten skies downe fell,
> And ore their banks the brookes and fountaines swell.[39]

Also typical of Fairfax is the frequent addition of allegorical and figurative phrases, such as the "the brazen trumpe of iron winged Fame,"[40] "the field of death, watred with dangers streams,"[41] and "high state the bed is where misfortune lies."[42] Sometimes these are added without due consideration for dramatic propriety, as when the flatterer Aletes, in the midst of what is supposedly a sugared speech, compares

[39] Other examples of Biblical addition occur in II, 2, 13, 22, 32, 66, 85; III, 36, 65; XII, 56, 75.

[40] I, 81. Quoted in *England's Parnassus.*

[41] II, 70.

[42] *Ibid.*

Godfrey and his host to "sommers flies that feare not winters cold" (II, 68). In Book IX we are given two variant allegories for a single action. In stanza 45, we are told that the Arabians, "like seelie sheepe destroy and kill" the Christians; and in stanza 48, that they destroy "Christ's vineyard like a savage boare." Most extraordinary is II, 55, where the Italian, for four lines, is forgotten and a complex allegory inserted:

> A hard division, when the harmless sheepe
> Must leave their lambes to hungrie wolves in charge,
> But labour's vertue's watching, ease her sleepe,
> Trouble best wind that drives salvations barge.[43]

Related to the introduction of allegory is the frequent use of homely comparisons. These parallels Fairfax draws from country life, and from the commonplace things of the world, and fits them into the original, generally at the ends of stanzas. The French in their fighting, we are told, are "Like fire of straw, soone kindled, soone burnt out" (I, 62); the Christians rejoice at the signal for battle;

> So if with drought endang'red be their graine,
> Poore plowmen joy, when thunders promise raine.
> (I, 71)

When Jerusalem totters, Ismeno tells Alamine: "The axe is laid *unto this cedars rout*" (II, 3). We have parallels with bellows (II, 31), with the vine and elm (II, 63), with the posts of houses (II, 85), with swarming bees (III, 1), with gardeners lopping off branches (III, 43), with chained bullets from a mortar (IX, 54), with the spreading circles in a pond (XVIII, 96), and with birds of many sorts—doves, eagles, crows and goshawks—all without foundation in the Italian. In this tendency Fairfax never goes so far as Browne in his notorious image of the somersaulting boy; but he produces several disrupting lines, of which this one, criticized by Doyne and Wiffen (Wiffen calls it the climax of burlesque), is an outstanding example:

> Their names were writ, and in a helmet shaken,
> While each did fortunes grace and aid implore;
> The Earle of Pembrooke was, *Artimidore,*
> *Doubtlesse the Countie thought his bread well baken.*
> (V, 73)

It must be admitted that there is something lively and appealing here but scarcely consonant with Tasso.

[43] This stanza has been widely condemned. Doyne thought it incomprehensible and a wretched insertion. Wiffen (translator of Tasso, 1821) condemned it for its puritanical spirit. I find nothing puritanical in it, and cannot consider it more out of place than similar moralizing passages in *Lycidas*. I have accepted the emendation of S. W. Singer. The first edition prints: "But labour and virtues watching, ease her sleepe." If *virtues* is a plural and *ease* a verb, I find the passage obscure. My interpretation is: "Ease is the sleep of virtue; her labour is watching."

A related characteristic is Fairfax's superimposition of the native English tradition of poetry on his Italian text. In the tree catalogue of III, 75 and 76 he not only translates Tasso, but adds "the showter Eugh" from Chaucer[44] and "sailing Pine," "weeping Firre," and "Oake, the King of forrests crown'd" from Spenser.[45] The line (IV, 86),

> She thought to strike the iron that was hot,

though proverbial, may possibly be in memory of *Troilus and Criseyde*, as the line (XII, 33);

> When more than halfe my tap of life was runne,

is more obviously from the Reeve's Prologue. Such passages as

> A prouder knight treads not on grasse or ground (III, 40)

and

> The neerest way seem'd best, ore holt and heath (VIII, 12)

fall strangely indeed (from the old moralities and romances) into this Italianate poem.

In I, 39, when describing two bishops, Reverend William and Good Ademaire, Fairfax soars from the rather dull Italian:

> L'uno e l'altro di lor, che ne' divini
> Ufficcii già trattò pio ministero,

to give us this:

> Their jollie notes they chanted lowd and cleare
> On merrie mornings at the masse divine,

a liquor neither Elizabethan nor of the Italian sixteenth century, but from the well of Chaucer, with the Gothic sparkle upon it. And in III, 8, in his song to Christ,

> Flower of goodness, root of lasting blisse,
> Thou well of life,

he leaves Tasso entirely, and follows a long mediaeval English tradition of the sacred song.

We have yet to consider one of the most important characteristics of Fairfax's translating technique, namely, a frequent use of massed synonyms for a single word in the Italian text. This habit is related to the introduction of numerous expletives; both have a common and two-fold origin, the necessity of padding to fill out the stanza form and the love of rhetorical words; and both become standard poetic devices of the seventeenth century. We need not read far in the text to find examples. In I, 4, the final couplet is:

---

[44] *Parlement of Foules*, line 180, "shetere ew."

[45] *Faerie Queene*, I, i, 8 and 9: "sayling Pine," "The Firre that weepeth still," "The builder Oake, sole King of forrests all."

My muse hereafter shall perhaps unfold
Your fights, your battailes, and your combats bold.

The whole last line is padding: three synonyms are combined with the typical expletive *bold*. The next two stanzas are replete with expletives and their nouns, such combinations as *"glorious* deed," *"martially* guize," *"valiant* band," not found in the Italian; and in stanza 7 we have another repetitive conclusion:

Look'd downe, and all at once this world behield,
Each land, each citie, countrie, towne and field.

Such repetition is more noticeable in the earlier part of the poem, but is continued to some extent throughout, and in places is so abundant as to seem the chief of Fairfax's mannerisms. As with many peculiarities of the *Godfrey*, it has its beginnings in Tasso. The effect in the last couplet of I, 8, for example, is essentially the same in the Italian as in the English:

E pien di fé, di zelo, ogni mortale
Gloria, imperio, tesor mette in non cale.

And (full of zeale and faith) esteemed light
All worldly honour, empire, treasure, might.

In IX, 93, too, Tasso piles up a line of abstract nouns:

L'orror, la crudeltá, la téma, il lutto.

Fairfax, translating into a less polysyllabic language, was forced to add two more to the sequence:

Feare, crueltie, griefe, horrour, sorrow, paine.

Once or twice repetitions are carried to the border of absurdity, as in the translation of this finely repetitive passage in Tasso:

Ecco apparir Gierusalem si vede,
Ecco additar Gierusalem si scorge;

Hierusalem (behold) appear'd in sight,
Hierusalem they view, they see, they spie.
(III, 3)

But, on the whole, Fairfax gives such passages a heroical if artificial quality of rhetoric. He loses a simplicity present in the Italian, gains a superficial impressiveness, as in XIV, 48:

While this he said, he brought the champions twaine
Downe to a vault, wherein he dwels and lies,
It was a cave, high, wide, large, ample, plaine,
With goodly roomes, halles, chambers, galleries.

The Italian here is:

Cosí con lor parlando, al loco viene
Ov' egli ha il suo soggiorno e 'l suo riposo.

Questo è in forma di speco, e in sé contiene
Camere e sale, grande e spazioso.

Perhaps Fairfax's hall is more overpoweringly grand than Tasso's. It is difficult, however, to see in what measure "peace, assurance, quiet, ease and rest" (VI, 4) are more restful than the *securezza* and *quiete* we find in the Italian. This is manneristic redundance.

We have now considered in detail enough of the peculiar traits of Fairfax's translation to draw a few general conclusions concerning his method. He seems to have set to work with a profound respect for his text, and with a desire to render its spirit into English. He has made, for example, none of the willful condensations and changes that we find in Harington. On the other hand, he had a certain respect for his own genius, and a confidence in the goodness of his poetic imagination. And he had a desire to make his version beautiful, even at the expense of its accuracy. We find him, therefore, leaving the Italian sometimes for enthusiasm, and again from necessity. In his sunrise descriptions his exuberance often leads entirely away from Tasso; but in general he begins each stanza literally, though, before the close, need of rime or desire to decorate may lead him astray.

In translating, Fairfax found some sort of addition necessary. In rendering the eight lines of each stanza into our less-vowelled language, he seems to have come out often with only six or seven lines of English. He then had the last line or couplet left to complete, a problem which doubtless encouraged the use of massed nouns, epithets, Biblical and classical allusions, redundant lines, and generalized remarks. It is notable that in his original writings, the eclogues, these devices are more rarely found, massed synonyms in particular being scarce. In the *Godfrey*, however, they were a translating necessity. What was to become a common embellishment of English verse thus had a functional origin. Fairfax liked this method of translation so well that he used it constantly in the portions of his book that are not strictly literal. His closing couplets thus became the models which Waller confessed them to be.

It is to be remembered, however, that in the major part of his work Fairfax follows his text with the greatest care, and that often for fifty stanzas he will not deviate widely from it. This is especially the case in the second half of the poem, where his translating technique seems to have been fully developed. And it is to be recalled, in closing this study of Fairfax as a translator, that, despite all his faults, which in the iteration appear more common than the reader of *Godfrey* finds them, he has created a masterpiece of vigorous and on the whole faithful interpretation, a translation able to stand with any other in our language, as a rendition of a classic and an original work of art.

University of Chicago

GÓNGORA AND MILTON: TOWARD A DEFINITION OF THE BAROQUE

LOWRY NELSON, JR.

ANYONE using the word baroque[1] nowadays may easily find himself engaged in polemics. For critics of English and French literature it still has a suspicious sound. And for critics of the other major literatures of Western Europe it has various, often irreconcilable meanings. As a literary term, baroque seems readily applicable to Italian, Spanish, and German literature; but in English and French literature it has met with keen competition from the traditional political designations, Elizabethan and Jacobean, Louis XIV, and from the vague laudatory epithet, classicism. The outcome is still quite uncertain, though there are signs that baroque is winning battles in France. In England and America the situation is still fluid. We are not yet agreed that the term baroque describes the prevalent literary style between the Renaissance and neoclassicism. It may still suggest in English a kind of stylistic disease an author may catch even now. Or, again, it may suggest a temporally limited but freakish style to be mentioned only with condescension. Crashaw may be baroque, but not Ben Jonson; Donne, but not Milton. Yet a general stylistic revolution was occurring toward the end of the sixteenth century, and the death of Queen Elizabeth seems all but irrelevant.

If we agree to accept baroque as a period concept, we can avoid at the start a lot of confusion. The word's mongrel descent from scholasticism through art history should not make difficulties; for it can easily be cleansed of all unliterary reference merely by common consent. There is certainly no need for us to feel dependent on Wölfflin. It is the task of literary historians to forge new criteria for the literary baroque. This is all an old story at least for historians of German literature. Such questions in regard to German literature were raised many years ago. But early attempts to answer them have not been followed through. And all too often stylistic considerations have given way to intellectual history. The problem remains to establish adequate criteria for characterizing the style of baroque literature.

Since literary movements do not stop at national boundaries, our ultimate concern should be with a European literary baroque. There is, however, danger in casting so widely as to bring up only oddities. And

[1] For a full account of the history of the word and concept, see René Wellek, "The Concept of the Baroque in Literary Scholarship," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, V (1946), 77-109.

there is another danger in limiting the cast so drastically as to miss the major possibilities. To be safe, one must take a representative sampling, representative, that is. of the best and most original. For the most promising approach to characterizing the baroque is to establish ways of distinguishing it from the Renaissance—and the new style is most easily seen in the great poets. Once we are able to show what the great baroque poets have in common with each other and with no Renaissance poet, we shall have established the basis for a characterization of baroque poetic style. If we succeed in discovering a significant common denominator for Góngora, Milton, Donne, Marino, Théophile de Viau, and others we may suspect of greatness and innovation, we shall then be in a position to consider and order the lesser poets. It would be a mistake to descend too soon into the lower realms of poetry; for there is a large quantity of common conservative practice which could show exceptions to almost any generalization.

Granted, as a working hypothesis, that the baroque is a general literary movement in Western Europe, what elements of style should we investigate in order to see if it is possible to establish unity? A good deal has been written about baroque imagery. But the question whether there is a definite kind of baroque image has not been adequately answered. Most studies of imagery have been limited to one literature. Those concerned with English literature have been particularly illuminating, but as yet they do not provide a sound basis for differentiating between Renaissance and baroque. Many attempts have been made to characterize baroque poetic style by its use of rhetorical figures. They too are open to the same criticism, especially in the light of Curtius' collection of *topoi*.[2] It may turn out that the only way to characterize the baroque is in terms of ideology or world view.

Before the stylistic approach is abandoned, however, I should like to offer another means of analyzing poetic structure—a means which can at least help us understand certain baroque poems and which may, in the end, help us draw an adequate characterization. But that is looking far ahead to the day when it will be possible to write a stylistic history of baroque literature. For the present, I shall limit myself to considering briefly the time structure of the baroque lyric.

One of the most obvious things about poetry is that it always concerns time. Even poems without verbs have, in performance, an understood time structure, however simple. By paying special attention to tense, it is often possible to reveal a strong source of structure. But it appears that time was first employed as a conspicuous and major means of structure in the baroque lyric. By way of illustration I shall consider in some detail two long lyrics, Góngora's *Polifemo* (1613) and Milton's

[2] Ernst Robert Curtius, *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter* (Bern, 1948).

Nativity Ode (1629). Though at one time it seemed all too easy to contrast Góngora and Milton, we should now be disposed to fancy them facing each other, if at a distance, the one looking toward St. Michael's Mount, the other toward Namancos and Bayona's hold.

Góngora has commonly been blamed for the failings of his successors, and for establishing a convention which stifled the genius of other poets. He is the seducer who led Spanish poetry into a blind alley. Some years ago a jaunty book presented the charges in English.[3] Rather patronizingly it censured and ridiculed Góngora's poetry, but significantly mistranslated it. Now, through the efforts of Alfonso Reyes, Dámaso Alonso, and others, we have been able to witness a full vindication of Góngora's style.[4] If Spanish poetry declined after the baroque, we can no longer think it was merely because Góngora entered a Renaissance garden in the form of a serpent. Actually, his example went unrivaled by later poets.

The immediate source of the *Polifemo* is Ovid. In the thirteenth book of the *Metamorphoses* we encounter a scene in which Galatea tells Scylla of her harrowing adventures. Polyphemus emerges, in her narrative, as a grotesque figure with all the dangerous impulses of a gigantic simpleton. She tells her tale of love for Acis, Polyphemus' jealousy, and finally Acis' death, with simple directness. The discourse, in short, is suited decorously to the speaker. In Góngora's poem the situation is quite different. The point of view is that of an impartial narrator, who presents all the characters with a touch of pathos. We find ourselves well on the way toward a sophisticated version of Beauty and the Beast. The characterization is refined, and the mode of narrative becomes quite complex. What at first seems a leisurely untroubled pace soon changes into almost a surrealistic tension between slowness and rapidity, calmness and excitement. To account for the effect, we must look at the remarkable alternation of tenses. It is more than the usual substitution of historical present for past. It is a new way of generating tension and, fortunately for the success of the poem, structure.

At the beginning of the poem proper, after an uncommon but comfortable start in the present tense, we encounter a rather abrupt switch to the past. Gradually we become aware of a measured oscillation between the two tenses. Polyphemus is introduced in the past and a little

[3] Elisha K. Kane, *Gongorism and the Golden Age: A Study of Exuberance and Unrestraint in the Arts* (Chapel Hill, 1928).

[4] See Dámaso Alonso, "Claridad y belleza de las Soledades," in *Soledades de Góngora* (Madrid, 1927), pp. 7-38; *Evolución de la sintaxis de Góngora* (Madrid, 1928); *La lengua poética de Góngora*, Part I (Madrid, 1935); the reprint of "Claridad y belleza de las Soledades" and "Alusión y elusión en la poesía de Góngora" in *Ensayos sobre poesía española* (Madrid, 1944), pp. 189-216 and 217-239; "Monstruosidad y belleza en el 'Polifemo' de Góngora," in *Poesía española: Ensayo de métodos y límites estilísticos* (Madrid, 1950). See also Alfonso Reyes, *Cuestiones gongorinas* (Madrid, 1927).

later Galatea in the present. But, starting with stanza 18, we read a fairly long passage of six stanzas entirely in the present. Here there seems to be a preparation for the main action, ranging from vague forebodings to Galatea's success in finally finding a resting place. Acis then appears in the past tense; and, after another oscillating passage, the narrative emerges, with the meeting of Acis and Galatea, again into the present tense in a long passage of somewhat more than six stanzas. Next comes the lovers' dalliance, appropriately in oscillating tenses. And we are led to the third and last long passage in the present, this time of eight stanzas, concerning Polyphemus' arrival and the first part of his speech. As he becomes more and more shrill in his own self-praise, losing himself in detail, the tenses begin to alternate again. When he spies the lovers and goes into action, the oscillation becomes more and more rapid. How Polyphemus is interrupted by his goats, and how he accidentally discovers the whereabouts of the lovers, we find narrated in the past. Then the alarm and flight of the lovers appear in the present. But the past returns immediately when we are told of the hares they scattered in their haste. "Solicitan el mar con pies alados" and "de liebres dirimió copia así amiga."[5] But the very next stanza brings us, by way of present participial clauses and a short clause in the past definite, back to the present tense. The resolution occurs in the lines,

> y al garzón viendo, cuantas mover pudo
> celoso trueno, antiguas hayas mueve.[6]

Polyphemus is the subject; it is he who "moves," that is, shakes the "ancient beech trees." His next act reverts to the past again:

> Con violencia desgajó, infinita,
> la mayor punta de la excelsa roca . . .

But we are jerked back into the present as the passage continues:

> . . . que al joven, sobre quien la precipita,
> urna es mucha, pirámide no poca.[7]

For a moment the present tense prevails; at the end of the stanza, however, the tense suddenly changes again to the past. The sentence structure itself seems unhinged.

> Concurren todas, y el peñasco duro,
> la sangre que exprimió, cristal fué puro.[8]

[5] All the quotations are from the *Obras Completas*, ed. Juan and Isabel Millé y Giménez (Madrid, 1943). The two phrases translate: "[the two lovers] seek the ocean with winged feet"; "[the couple] so scattered a friendly abundance of hares."

[6] "And seeing the youth, moves all the ancient beech trees jealous thunder could move."

[7] "With infinite violence he tore loose the greatest peak of the lofty rock, which for the youth, over whom he dashes it, is an ample urn, a not-scanty pyramid."

[8] "All [the deities of the sea] gather, and the blood that the hard boulder pressed out was pure crystal."

The past continues to hold sway in the first half of the next and final stanza. Yet the second half begins with present participial clauses and reaches a direct present tense:

> Corriendo plata al fin sus blancos huesos,
> lamiendo flores y argentando arenas,
> a Doris llega . . .

This final appearance of the present tense is very brief, for the poem closes with the next line and a half in the past:

> . . . que con llanto pío,
> yerno le saludó, le aclamó río.[9]

While intent upon Acis' transformation, the reader undergoes a minor transformation himself. He comes to the poem with a confidence in simple time, and leaves it with a feeling of temporal confusion. Yet, if he is perceptive, he realizes that he has been meaningfully confused. He discovers in the poem, successfully fused together, a whole new range of possibilities. Time, in the guise of tense, seems to serve not only complexity but also structure.

On rereading the *Polifemo,* one sees clearly that the structure of tenses does not conflict with the movement of the poem in terms of plot; in fact, it gives it unexpected strength, as well as a new dimension. Besides, the tense structure not merely underscores the main turns in the action of the poem; it contributes an important movement of its own. Throughout there is, to speak metaphorically, a battle of tenses going on, a battle for supremacy between present and past. During the first two-thirds of the poem, the present tense asserts itself more and more strongly. Then the past, which has made only a sustaining action, begins to take over, as if the present had expended itself in overexertion. As the poem ends the two tenses seem to be in equal struggle, with some advantage to the past which makes the final appearance. The sense we have of struggling tenses is heightened when we compare the *Polifemo* with its "norm"; the usual Renaissance long lyric, Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* for example, offers nothing beyond the use of historical present. It is safe to say, then, that the *Polifemo* achieves its structure in terms of tense as well as of plot. In fact, we may see, from a consideration of tense, that the most important means of structure is not plot in the ordinary sense, but rather plot as the continuous acceleration of alternating tenses. Not only does tense cooperate with meaning; it becomes its most powerful exponent.

This "confusionism," this forceful conjunction of separate time planes, is even more central in Milton's *Nativity Ode.* In the Introduc-

[9] "Finally, his [Acis'] white bones running argent, brushing by flowers and silvering sands, he reaches Doris, who, with merciful lament, greeted him as a son-in-law, acclaimed him as a river."

tion that precedes the Hymn itself we can see the elements of confusion juxtaposed. At first Christ's birth is spoken of in the remote past; but in the third stanza it is suddenly assumed that Christ is still the "Infant God." The present tense is identified with the time of the journey of the Magi.

> See how from far upon the Eastern road
> The Star-led Wizards haste with odours sweet:
> O run, prevent them with thy humble ode,
> And lay it lowly at his blessed feet.[10]

But the simple effect of momentaneousness does not carry over into the Hymn itself, where more complex things are in store. At the beginning of the Hymn the tense changes back into the past, though not for long. It is startling to discover at the outset a mixture of tenses:

> It *was* the Winter wild,
> While the Heav'n-born child,
> All meanly wrapt in the rude manger *lies*.

A *while* clause might conceivably, within the bounds of poetic license, take a present tense, though the main clause is in the past. Or again, it might be simply for the sake of rime that the second verb switches to the present. Yet in the next stanza "Nature's" actions at the birth of Christ are described in the present tense. And in the third stanza God allays Nature's fears in the past. But by the end of the stanza we are back in the present. So smooth is the transition, by way of participial constructions, that we feel no abruptness.

> But he her fears to cease,
> *Sent* down the meek-ey'd Peace;
> She crown'd with Olive green, *came* softly *sliding*
> Down through the *turning* sphere,
> His ready Harbinger,
> With Turtle wing the amorous clouds *dividing*,
> And *waving* wide her myrtle wand,
> She *strikes* a universal Peace through Sea and Land.

Schematically, the transition is made by shifting from a simple past tense to a series of participial phrases, thus weakening the force of the original tense and preparing the way for the present. As we continue we come, after a whole stanza in the past, upon another switch to the present.

> The Winds, with wonder whist,
> Smoothly the waters *kiss't*,
> *Whispering* new joys to the mild Ocean,

[10] All the quotations are from *Paradise Regained, the Minor Poems, and Samson Agonistes*, ed. M.Y. Hughes (New York, 1937). In order to avoid confusion with my italics, I have not followed the text in italicizing proper names. My italics point up verbs and sometimes gerunds and gerundives.

Who now *hath* quite *forgot* to rave,
While Birds of Calm *sit brooding* on the charmed wave.

This time a participle and a perfect tense prepare us for the change. The next stanza begins in the present; but toward the end, almost imperceptibly, we are again swung back into the past.

The Stars with deep amaze
Stand fixt in steadfast gaze,
Bending one way their precious influence,
And *will* not *take* their flight,
For all the morning light,
Or Lucifer that often *warn'd* them thence;
But in their glimmering Orbs *did glow*,
Until their Lord himself *bespake*, and *bid* them go.[11]

After a beginning in the present, running through a participle and a sort of descriptive future, the stanza turns toward the past; by way of the ambiguous "warn'd," which could stand either for a present perfect or a pluperfect ("has" or "had warn'd") and thus refer either to the preceding present or to the subsequent past tense, it moves into the resolution of the thought, which takes place in the past tense. The stars "stand fixt" and "did glow." Obviously the demands of rime cannot explain Milton's extraordinary use of tense.

We have found so far a rather rapid alternation of tenses. The reader's time sense is meaningfully "confused." It is, in fact, a process of fusing together two disparate time planes. The tenses begin to oscillate with much less rapidity as the angelic hosts draw near. We reach, by way of slower alternation, the center of the poem (stanzas 12 to 17), where something new occurs. Joy at hearing the celestial music finds expression in an exuberant widening of the time range. In one direction we are taken back to Creation; and in the other we are taken forward to the time when Heaven and earth will be united. So great a stretch can happen without disturbing the two chief time planes of the poem and their gradual identification, since up to that point the two tenses, past and present, have alternated in so smooth and coherent a way that their contemporaneity is, in terms of the poem, established. We witness here almost a literal encirclement; for, as we are told, if the celestial music continues for long, "Time *will run* back, and fetch the age of gold" (stanza 14). All the while we have the reference to Creation in mind (stanza 12), and think, perhaps, of the pristine innocence of the world when it was in direct communion with Heaven. In the lines (stanza 15),

[11] "Bespake" means simply "spoke" (see *NED*, s.v. "bespeak," 1:2, where the passage is cited). And "bid" is a past tense of the verb, instead of "bade." Milton uses the same form further along in the poem, line 124 (see *NED*, s.v. "bid," paragraph B of variant forms).

Yea, Truth and Justice then
Will down *return* to men,

the circularity of time is hypothetically fulfilled. Heaven and earth will again be fully reconciled. The whole passage (stanzas 12 to 15), in which the tense leaps to "extreme" past and "extreme" future, is a thorough testing of the identification of the two time planes.

No sooner is the union of Heaven and earth envisioned than it is cut short. Wisdom tempers ecstasy.

But wisest Fate says no,
This must not yet be so,
The Babe *lies* yet in smiling Infancy,
That on the bitter cross
Must redeem our loss.

We are brought "down to earth" again in being reminded that the Christ Child "is" still a child, and must grow up and suffer death on the cross. Here the tense, seen under the general aspect of the poem, begins to consolidate. As the poem continues, we see how the new present tense, standing for what was before an alternation between past and present, strengthens itself, until the poem ends serenely in a vivid pinpointed present. In the stanza just quoted we come face to face with the central paradox of the poem, already implied in the identification of the two time planes; the Christ Child was and is an infant, yet Christ must ascend the cross and die, as, paradoxically, He has done already. It is a paradox familiar to Christians. Sinners are said to crucify Christ. And the Mass itself is a re-enactment of Christ's foreknowledge of Calvary. In terms of the structure of the poem, the paradox has, to a large extent, been achieved artistically through the alternation of tenses.

After a reassuring vision of the Last Judgment, the "new" present tense takes over.

And then at last our bliss
Full and perfect *is*,
But now *begins* . . .

What follows immediately is the passage on the rout of the pagan deities. We must ask ourselves what purpose it has at this point. Its relevance to the occasion is quite clear, for it serves to show some of the consequence of Christ's birth. In terms of thematic balance, the flight of the pagan gods continues and contrasts with the action of the coming of the angels; the movement of glorious arrival finds its antithesis in the movement of ignominious escape. Insofar as tense is concerned, the passage helps to consolidate the newly achieved present tense. It is all in the present, except for an incidental present perfect (stanza 23), which in effect serves to strengthen the present; and, not only that, it is mainly in an emphatic progressive present:

Apollo from his shrine
Can no more *divine,*
With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos *leaving* . . .
The *parting* Genius *is* with *sighing sent.*

The simple present verbs have, quite naturally, a continuous meaning: "inspires" (stanza 19), "mourn" (20), "moan" (21), "seems to sweat" (21), "forgoes" (21), "shrinks" (22). Moloch having fled, his worshippers try to reinvoke him:

In vain with Cymbals' ring
They call the grisly king,
In dismal dance about the furnace blue.

Their action is described in terms of continuous movement. The whole gradual process is eventually rounded out in the description of the rising sun:

So when the Sun in bed,
Curtain'd with cloudy red,
Pillows his chin upon an Orient wave,
The flocking shadows pale
Troop to th'infernal jail;
Each fetter'd Ghost slips to his several grave,
And the yellow-skirted Fays
Fly after the Night-steeds, leaving their Moon-lov'd maze.

Here is another instance of balanced movement: the action of the evil spirits finds its antithesis in the rising of the sun.[12] From the point of view of tense, the result is a "braking" of the progressive aspect. For, after the pagan gods are gone, the tense becomes mostly a simple present. The poem is to end with an impression of narrowing down to a precise "instantaneous" present. Thus, the last stanza begins with an imperative, "But see!"—addressed to the reader; and it has a purely present, instantaneous, connotation. Even when the tense goes into the present perfect, referring to an action in the immediate past, it has the effect of emphasizing the instantaneous present of the closing lines:

But see! the Virgin blest,
Hath laid her Babe to rest.
Time is our tedious Song should here have ending;
Heav'n's youngest teemed Star
Hath fixt her polisht Car,
Her sleeping Lord with Handmaid Lamp attending . . .

The poem ends in as precise a present as possible:

[12] It is a question whether the metaphor succeeds. For the sake of accuracy, it should be said that the sun is conceived both as the sun rising and as someone awakening from bedeviled dreams. In awakening, the sun-man dispels his own bad dreams; in rising, the sun-sun dispels real demons from the earth. At all events, the total metaphor functions as a comparison between a greater and a lesser action, and provides a transition from the "extraordinary" to the "ordinary."

> And all about the Courtly Stable,
> Bright-harness'd Angels sit in order serviceable.

While the past tense has been left far behind, we cannot think that the poem merely emerges into a historical present; in terms of structure and in terms of the central paradox, as we have seen, the tense has helped to identify the birth of Christ with Christmas as it has been celebrated ever since. So we see how much the time structure depends upon special uses of tense, and how closely tense is linked to meaning. All the main elements of the poem work together remarkably well to achieve the almost ecstatic joy, and, by transforming it, the final serenity.

In the *Nativity Ode* the development of time structure coincides with thematic development. In the *Polifemo* the coincidence is perhaps less evident, though quite demonstrable. As the dénouement is being prepared for, the tense oscillates with ease, and there are three evenly spaced sections of from six to eight stanzas in the present tense, marking the three main phases of the action: Galatea's plight, the coming of Acis, and the sudden appearance and harangue of Polyphemus. As the dénouement actually takes place, with the final violent act of Polyphemus and its consequence, the tense oscillates with ever increasing rapidity. In the *Nativity Ode,* on the other hand, we find an additional level of meaning; tense not only reflects or produces action, it also contributes to the poetical "proof" of doctrine. But, despite differences in success, the two poems have a fundamental paradox in common; for in both the action exists simultaneously on two time planes. In broader terms we find coexistence of the unique and the constant, the *einmalig* and the *stetig.* A single action which, literally speaking, took place at a more or less definite time in the past, is set open to the possibility of recurring indefinitely.[13] In a sense, the birth of Christ occurs every Christmas. Acis and Galatea are, in a sense, always trying to escape the jealous violence of Polyphemus. Constructing such paradoxes is a means of "conquering" time through time.

Although it seems wise to avoid the snares of *Geistesgeschichte* and refrain from considering the literary baroque as an aspect of the Counter Reformation, the use of time in many lyrics, with implications of paradox and gradual continuity, may be linked to prevailing Christian doctrine. The Christian view of time as bounded at either end made possible a heightened awareness of the simultaneity of all events, past, present, and future, at least in the mind of God. If we maintain a double view of time, under a finite and under an infinite aspect, we create a fundamental paradox for ourselves. It is that paradox that many of the best baroque poets exploited. In effect, they pushed the proposition a step further. If all events may be considered simultaneous, "finite" time

[13] There is, perhaps, a temptation to invoke at this point Wölfflin's categories of closed and open form. But, until more evidence is assembled, we must resist it.

need not be strictly observed according to our empirically chronological habit. A poet, therefore, could very well seize upon time as just another contingent and manipulatable element of poetic structure.

It might be objected that no baroque poet stuck consistently to such an extremely "relative" formulation; yet the *Nativity Ode*, as well as many other baroque poems, lies at quite a distance from the mediaeval and Renaissance lyric, along the continuum which stretches to Mallarmé and Apollinaire. From even a broader perspective, we might say that what had previously been taken for granted as a "given" postulate of experience received a kind of revaluation, a closer scrutiny than before, as the scholastic world view broke up under attack from the new philosophy. Besides, the crumbling of the old world view made it necessary for the poet, in writing a complex lyric, to cope with uncertainty by including more explicit signs of a strengthened and structured world view. Probably for such reasons as these, though preoccupation with time is evident from antiquity, the conspicuous use of time as a means of structure in the lyric is a development of the baroque.

It may well be, then, that the similarities we notice between Góngora and Milton in their peculiar use of tense are not superficial or accidental, but have a deep foundation and a wide currency. Certainly there is every reason to continue testing the hypothesis that there is a baroque style in the lyric, a style which can be described and delimited in literary terms. And certainly a proper "scientific" way to go about it is to cast off arbitrary formulations of literary periods in terms of political or intellectual or art history. A history of literary style is at least good for a try.

Society of Fellows, Harvard University

GOETHE, ARISTOPHANES, AND THE CLASSICAL WALPURGISNIGHT

STUART ATKINS

IN his comprehensive account of Aristophanes' fame and influence, *Aristophanes und die Nachwelt*, Wilhelm Süss asserts that after his Italian journey "hat Goethe jedes nähere Verhältnis zu Aristophanes verloren."[1] In view of the justness of his strictures upon the merits of Goethe's adaptation of the first part of *The Birds* (1780), one is tempted to be convinced when Süss goes on to declare:

> Bei Wolfs Wolken weiß er nur Format, Druck und Papier zu loben. Gelegentliche Äußerungen zeigen überraschende Lauheit. Vieles davon gehört freilich zu jener Gattung von höchst allgemeinen und recht wohlwollenden Urteilen, wie sie der alte Goethe gelegentlich diesem oder jenem gegenüber aussprach, und wie sie in unserer Zeit, in der Goethezitate zum ständigen Beiwerk fast jedes Buches gehören, immer aufs neue wieder gewichtig kolportiert werden. In der Antike des Neuhumanismus mit ihren kalten, blassen Marmorbildern, ihrer edlen Einfalt und stillen Größe, über der
>
> ewig klar und spiegelrein und eben
> floß das zephyrleichte Leben
> im Olymp den Seligen dahin,
>
> ist Aristophanes wiederum ein Fremdling.

Certainly the remarks of Goethe's most frequently cited in discussions of his relation to Aristophanes[2] confirm Süss' view that the lively interest in Aristophanes aroused by Storm and Stress writers was maintained later primarily by virtue of the efforts of the German romanticists and their successors. This does not prove, however, that Aristophanes ceased to be a fructifying influence for the poet Goethe after 1780; "Deutsche Klassik" and "Deutsche Romantik" are not mutually exclusive intellectual worlds. Goethe never ceased to be well informed about the literary and critical enthusiasms of his younger, romantic contemporaries; although he may have ignored Aristophanes in his years of extreme Winckelmannian classicism, he could not have successfully done so after Tieck's inauguration of the genre "Aristophanic comedy" with *Der gestiefelte Kater* (1797). It is therefore not surprising to discover that Goethe read or reread various plays of

[1] *Das Erbe der Alten*, Hefte II-III (Leipzig, 1911), p. 119.

[2] See Franz Thalmayr, *Goethe und das classische Alterthum* (Leipzig, 1897), p. 47; Hans Morsch, "Goethe und die griechischen Bühnendichter" (*Programm*, Berlin, 1888), p. 13; Curt Hille, *Die deutsche Komödie unter der Einwirkung des Aristophanes* (Breslauer Beiträge, N.F., Heft II, Leipzig, 1907), pp. 123 f.; Fritiz Hilsenbeck, *Aristophanes und die deutsche Literatur des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Berliner Beiträge, German. Abt., No. 21, Berlin, 1908), p. 58.

Aristophanes in 1798, 1790-1800, 1810, 1812, and 1821,[3] and that all his critical opinions of Aristophanes, except for the phrase "der ungezogene Liebling der Grazien" (epilogue to *Die Vögel*), were formulated between 1803 and 1831.[4]

That Goethe repeatedly mentions Aristophanes between March 15, 1778 (diary entry) and March 3, 1832 (conversation with C. W. Göttling) is not of itself a very important fact, although it is perhaps significant that in Grumach's *Goethe und die Antike* as many pages are needed to record his references to Aristophanes as are devoted to his references to the indubitably influential figure of Virgil. Many of Goethe's recorded remarks are little more than responses to situations not of his own creating, and reveal only that he was a man of broad interests, usually willing to contribute politely to conversations and to acknowledge politely in writing the receipt of letters and books. If his interest in Aristophanes is to be considered of literary importance, it must be found reflected in his literary works. *Die Vögel* follows Aristophanes' comedy too closely to stand as an independent poetic creation, and it is therefore probably best ignored in any attempt to evaluate Aristophanes' ultimate importance for Goethe. Even Goethe's quotation of the opening lines of *The Ecclesiazusae* at the end of the second act of *Der Triumph der Empfindsamkeit* (1777), although evidence that he shared the fashionable Storm and Stress interest in Aristophanes, cannot plausibly be offered in demonstration of either genuine familiarity with the plays or deep appreciation of the merits of Attic comedy.

Goethe's first truly free literary exploitation or development of something from Aristophanes follows his reading of Wieland's translation of *The Knights* (diary entry, January 11, 1798)—his use of the Boeotian seer Bacis (*Knights*, lines 122 ff.) in the title and text of *Weissagungen des Bakis*. The debt to Aristophanes is not simply the borrowing of a name which Goethe may well have known already from Herodotus, although this is what E. von der Hellen seems to imply in his commentary (Jubiläums-Ausgabe, I, 362 f.). These oracular distichs are comic verse, half parodistic, half nonsensical; they are products of the same skeptical spirit that allows Aristophanes in *The Knights* to have Demosthenes ask Nicias if he really believes that there are gods, and Goethe frankly refers to them as "Torheiten" in his letter to A. W. Schlegel of March 20, 1800. Their pompousness is meant to be humorous—a fact of some importance for the understanding of the second part of *Faust*, which is not fully accessible to the

[3] Elise von Keudell, *Goethe als Benutzer der Weimarer Bibliothek* (Weimar, 1931), p. 34; Ernst Grumach, *Goethe und die Antike: Eine Sammlung* (Berlin 1949), I, 306-308.

[4] Grumach, pp. 307-309.

reader who approaches its text with the assumption that Goethe uses elevated diction only when in dead earnest. On December 4, 1827, in a period when he was constantly concerned with *Faust II*, Goethe wrote revealingly to Zelter:

> Die Deutschen quälen sich und mich mit den Weissagungen des Bakis, früher mit dem Hexeneinmaleins [*Faust I!*] und so manchem andern Unsinn, den man dem schlichten Menschenverstande anzueignen gedenkt.

The *Weissagungen des Bakis* with their *doubles entendres* and deliberate comic obscurity are the work of a writer who admired Aristophanes without feeling the need to imitate his work slavishly; they represent a partial revelation of the profound sympathy with Aristophanic humor that Goethe was later to acknowledge in *Zum Kyklops des Euripides* (1823):

> Von dem Niedrigen, Sittenlosen wendet sich der Gebildete mit Abscheu weg und wird in Erstaunen gesetzt, wenn es ihm dergestalt gebracht wird, daß er es nicht abweisen kann, vielmehr solches mit Behagen aufzunehmen genötigt ist. Aristophanes gibt uns hievon die unverwerflichsten Zeugnisse.

In the *Annalen* for 1820 and 1821 (composed in 1823 and 1825 and in 1822-23, respectively) Goethe mentions Aristophanes once under each year:

> Reisigs Bemerkungen über den Aristophanes erschienen bald darauf; ich eignete mir gleichfalls [as with Wolf's *Prolegomena ad Homerum*], was mir gehörte, daraus zu...

> Aristophanes von Voß gab uns neue Ansichten und ein frisches Interesse an dem seltsamsten aller Theaterdichter.

Neither of these statements is remarkably illuminating in itself, but the contexts in which they stand show that for Goethe Aristophanes had become a literary figure of the first importance.

The first quotation comes from a paragraph devoted solely to Homer and Aristophanes, Wolf and Reisig, and its "gleichfalls" refers to what might be called Goethe's faith that apparently discrete parts of a literary work may none the less constitute a coherent whole, to the faith that may well have sustained him as he strove to complete *Faust*:

> Beim Studieren des gedachten Werkes [*Prolegomena ad Homerum*] merkt' ich mir selbst und meinen inneren Geistesoperationen auf. Da gewahrt' ich denn, daß eine Systole und Diastole immerwährend in mir vorging. Ich war gewohnt, die beiden Homerischen Gedichte als Ganzheiten anzusehen, und hier wurden sie mir jedes mit großer Kenntnis, Scharfsinn und Geschicklichkeit getrennt und auseinander gezogen, und indem sich mein Verstand dieser Vorstellung willig hingab, so faßte gleich darauf ein herkömmliches Gefühl alles wieder auf *einen* Punkt zusammen, und eine gewisse Läßlichkeit, die uns bei allen wahren poetischen Produktionen ergreift, ließ mich die bekannt gewordenen Lücken, Differenzen und Mängel wohlwollend übersehen.

In his next paragraph Goethe turns to a topic—"die französische Literatur, ältere and neuere"—far removed from Greek literature, but

in the one before that on Homer and Aristophanes he treats, also together, two subjects of central importance in the "Hauptgeschäft" of the last years of his life: mythology and geology.

Hermanns Programm über das Wesen und die Behandlung der Mythologie empfing ich mit der Hochachtung, die ich den Arbeiten dieses vorzüglichen Mannes [author of *De mythologia Graecorum antiquissima*, mentioned in the *Annalen* for 1817, the year of its appearance] von jeher gewidmet hatte... Eine Bemerkung konnte mir nicht entgehen: daß die sprach-erfindenden Urvölker, bei Benamung der Naturerscheinungen und deren Verehrung als waltender Gottheiten, mehr durch das Furchtbare als durch das Erfreuliche derselben aufgeregt worden, so daß sie eigentlich mehr tumultuarisch zerstörende als ruhig schaffende Gottheiten gewahr wurden. Mir schienen, da sich denn doch dieses Menschengeschlecht in seinen Grundzügen niemals verändert, die neuesten geologischen Theoristen von eben dem Schlage, die ohne feuerspeiende Berge, Erdbeben, Kluftrisse, unterirdische Druck- und Quetschwerke... keine Welt zu erschaffen wissen.

The second reference to Aristophanes in the *Annalen* likewise follows a discussion of Homer (three paragraphs this time, rather than just one), but is separated from it by the following short paragraph:

Die Fragmente Phaethons, von Ritter Hermann mitgeteilt, erregten meine Produktivität. Ich studierte eilig manches Stück des Euripides, um mir den Sinn dieses außerordentlichen Mannes wieder zu vergegenwärtigen. Professor Göttling übersetzte die Fragmente, und ich beschäftigte mich lange mit einer möglichen Ergänzung.

Goethe's "Ergänzung" is "Phaethon, Tragödie des Euripides: Versuch einer Wiederherstellung aus Bruchstücken," *Über Kunst und Altertum*, IV, H. 2 (1823), yet it is also the Euphorion scene of *Faust*, as has long been generally recognized. Mythology, Homer, Aristophanes —Homer, Euripides, Aristophanes—with the use of these two groups of concepts both the "Klassische Walpurgisnacht" and the "Helena" can be more than sufficiently illuminated for the needs of a general critical interpretation of Goethe's *Faust*. It may be helpful to mention Aeschylus and Sophocles in connection with the "Helena"; but it is essential to understand that the "Helena," especially in its first and last scenes, deliberately challenges comparison with the dramas of Euripides. And, although it may seem that Vulcanism and Neptunism are almost as important as Greek mythology for the "Pharsalische Felder" section of the "Klassische Walpurgisnacht" (everything before "Felsbuchten des Ägäischen Meers"), these two geological theories are simply modern forms of myth making anachronistically introduced with Aristophanico-comic effect into the world of classical mythology which is this Walpurgisnight. That Thales is here opposed by a somewhat ridiculous Anaxagoras is a motif worthy of Aristophanes, who never missed an opportunity to ridicule Euripides; for, as Goethe knew from Diogenes Laertius' life of Anaxagoras, Euripides was the pupil of Anaxagoras:

Von diesem Philosophen wird gemeldet: "er habe behauptet, die Sonne sei eine

durchglühte Metallmasse . . . , wahrscheinlich, wie der aufmerkende und folgernde Philosoph sie aus der Esse halbgeschmolzen unter den schweren Hämmern gesehen. Bald darauf heißt es, daß er auch den Fall des Steins bei Aigos Potamoi vorausgesagt, und zwar werde derselbe aus der Sonne herunter fallen. Daher habe auch Euripides, der sein Schüler gewesen, die Sonne in der Tragödie *Phaethon* einen Goldklumpen genannt . . . ["Euripides Phaethon," *Über Kunst und Altertum*, VI, H. 2 (1877)]

To assert that Euripides is the most important classical literary model for the "Helena" is to be almost trite. To assert that Aristophanes is similarly important for the "Klassische Walpurgisnacht" may, however, seem to be merely clever. And it may even be objected that to discover an Aristophanic allusion to Euripides in the figure of Anaxagoras is to read into the text of *Faust* something for which no internal evidence exists—to interpret the "Klassische Walpurgisnacht" ex post facto in the light of the "Helena," a section of the text entirely different in spirit. But is there nothing Aristophanic in the "Helena"? Phorkyas-Mephistopheles' words on interrupting Faust and Helen in "Innerer Burghof,"

> Buchstabiert in Liebesfibeln,
> Tändelnd grübelt nur am Liebeln,
> Müßig liebelt fort im Grübeln,

are clearly malicious but not unhumorous parody of the language of their serious love scene. The exposition of the scene usually called "Schattiger Hain" is provided by a Mephistopheles whose account of the birth of Euphorion at least opens in a tone of Aristophanic mockery and skepticism, and who even addresses the "Bärtigen" of the audience with Aristophanic disregard of realistic illusion. And is there nothing Euripidean in the "Klassische Walpurgisnacht"? Its prologue is surely without a close counterpart in the works of Aeschylus or Sophocles, let alone of Aristophanes, but it is in the tradition of *Hecuba* (ghost of Polydorus), *Alcestis* (Apollo retreating before death), and the expository prologue primarily associated with the name of Euripides. Because there are serious elements in the "Klassische Walpurgisnacht"—"Felsbuchten des Ägäischen Meers" is obviously not farcical comedy—it is easy for the overearnest reader of *Faust* to ignore its Aristophanic component; to do this, however, is to risk finding it "ungebührlich ausgedehnt" (R. Petsch, Festausgabe, V, 678); for only if it is stylistically an Aristophanic counterpart of a Euripidean "Helena" can the length of the "Klassische Walpurgisnacht" be compositionally justified.

The latter part of the first act and the entire second act of *Faust II* together constitute "Helenas Antecedentien." The "Helena" itself, completed in 1825 and 1826, may antedate the execution of these antecedents, but—except for the "Urhelena" passages of 1800—it cannot have been written before Goethe conceived the "Raub der Helena"

(Rittersaal) and the "Klassische Walpurgisnacht." What form these two passages were to take need not have been clear to him, but that there were to be such passages is evident from the "Helena" act; not only does Faust desire Helen (making some such scene as Rittersaal necessary), but he tricks her into his presence with the help of a Mephistopheles who has already assumed the shape of Phorkyas. The "Helena-Ankündigung" of December 15-18, 1826 outlines a classical Walpurgisnight much more complex and confusing than the one which Goethe finally wrote; its very wealth of detail indicates, however, that he had already stored up in his memory all the motifs, themes, and mythological and historical figures which were to be used in the "Klassische Walpurgisnacht." The years 1825 and 1826, the years of the completion of the "Helena" and hence almost certainly of the conception of a classical Walpurgisnight, are those of Goethe's greatest interest in Euripides (fifteen of the seventy-one entries covering the years 1773-1832 in Grumach are from 1825 and 1826) and of Goethe's greatest tribute to Aristophanes—at some time between January 1825, when he outlined the contents of the third volume of the Ausgabe letzter Hand, and the end of the following year he placed in the group "Gott und Welt" the five poems now entitled "Parabase," "Die Metamorphose der Pflanzen," "Epirrhema," "Metamorphose der Tiere," and "Antepirrhema." Only if Goethe genuinely respected Aristophanes, whose plays *are* Old Comedy, can he have gratuitously added the titles "Parabase," "Epirrhema," and "Antepirrhema" to poems which in 1820, in *Zur Morphologie*, had no titles at all—especially when they are poems used to set in relief two such important statements of Goethe's world outlook as "Die Metamorphose der Pflanzen" and "Metamorphose der Tiere."

Whereas *Die Vögel* is Aristophanic chiefly because it is an imitation of Aristophanes, the three "Gott und Welt" poems with Old Comedy titles are for Goethe Aristophanic because he has come to realize that lightness of tone, certainly not a distinguishing feature of either "Metamorphose," is both perfectly compatible with basic seriousness—

> Das sogenannte Trauerspiel ist eigentlich das wahre Lustspiel und das sogenannte Lustspiel das eigentliche Trauerspiel, wenn man über etwas weinen oder lachen dürfte. Daß Ödipus sich die Augen ausreißt, ist eine Dummheit und nicht *weinerlich*; daß Aristophanes sich über die Menschen moquiert, ist ein Ernst, aber nicht lächerlich [to Riemer, 1803/1814—Biedermann, II², 255]

—and, what is more important, can be advantageously used to set strictly serious materials in effective relief. It is therefore misleading that, in his otherwise excellent commentary on this group of five poems, Emil Staiger should suggest:

> Vermutlich haben die Goethe wohlbekannten "Vögel" des Aristophanes die Überschrift [Parabase] veranlaßt, da dort in der Parabase ein naturgeschicht-

licher Mythos erzählt und wenigstens das Leben der gefiederten Tierwelt beschrieben wird.[5]

Since neither "Metamorphose" is a comic myth such as is found in *The Birds*, Staiger surely errs in taking "Parabase" to be the title of the group of poems, rather than that of "Freudig war vor vielen Jahren" only. This first poem is a parabasis in the narrowest sense of the term, "der Anfang des Vortrags [the series of speeches which constitute the parabasis of Old Comedy], oder der erste Abschnitt, in dem der Dichter von sich spricht . . . auch Anapästus . . . genannt,"[6] and accordingly it ends on the completely personal note, "Zum Erstaunen bin ich da," while "Epirrhema" ("Müsset im Naturbetrachten . . . ") and "Antepirrhema" ("So schauet mit bescheidnem Blick . . .") are both couched in the exhortation or "Volkspredigt"[7] form regularly characteristic of these two sections of the total parabasis.

The foregoing delimitation of the Aristophanic component of the five poems "Parabase"—"Antepirrhema" should make clear that to discern Aristophanic elements in the "Klassische Walpurgisnacht" is not to insist that this part of *Faust* is Aristophanic in any rigidly classicistic or archaizing sense. On the other hand, the close thematic associations of these poems with the text of *Faust* and, especially, with its classical Walpurgisnight[8] are further evidence that Goethe was highly conscious of the form and substance of Old Comedy both when he planned and when he executed the "Klassische Walpurgisnacht." Of greatest total relevance to *Faust* is "Metamorphose der Tiere," which states directly:

> Dieser schöne Begriff von Macht und Schranken, von Willkür
> Und Gesetz, von Freiheit und Maß, von beweglicher Ordnung,
> Vorzug und Mangel erfreue dich hoch! Die heilige Muse
> Bringt harmonisch ihn dir, mit sanftem Zwange belehrend.
> Keinen höhern Begriff erringt der sittliche Denker,
> Keinen der tätige Mann, der dichtende Künstler; der Herrscher,
> Der verdient, es zu sein, erfreut nur durch ihn sich der Krone.

---

[5] J. W. Goethe, *Gedichte, mit Erläuterungen von Emil Staiger* (n.p., n.d.), II, 474.

[6] P. F. Kannegiesser, *Die alte komische Bühne im Athen* (Breslau, 1817), p. 360.

[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 366 and 372.

[8] The loom image of "Antepirrhema" is a serious variation of *Faust*, lines 1922-27. In "Parabase," "gestaltend, umgestaltend" recalls Mephistopheles' "Gestaltung, Umgestaltung" (in the "Finstere Galerie" scene of "Helenas Antecedentien"), while its "Nah und fern und fern und nah" and "Zum Erstaunen" recall the stage direction "Proteus . . . bald nah, bald fern" and Thales' "Trifft man auch Proteus, gleich ist er zerronnen; / Und steht er auch, so sagt er nur zuletzt, / Was staunen macht und in Verwirrung setzt" (in "Felsbuchten des Ägäischen Meers"), "Die Metamorphose der Pflanzen," with its "Bildsam ändre der Mensch selbst die bestimmte Gestalt" and its "gedenke denn auch . . . wie Amor zuletzt Blüten und Früchte gezeugt," is echoed in Proteus' "Man wächst so nach und nach heran / Und bildet sich zu höherem Vollbringen" and the Sirens' "So herrsche denn Eros, der alles begonnen!"

Here is the doctrine of one universal law governing all activity, whether in the realm of physical nature or in that of the spirit, which is the great theme of "Felsbuchten des Ägäischen Meers." For it is in connection with Homunculus' quest for physical existence that the power of art to make meaningful the apparent disharmonies of finite human life is for the first time asserted in *Faust* since Vorspiel auf dem Theater (in Nereus' account of "Trojas Gerichtstag, rhythmisch festgebannt")—and for the first time since the Lord's "Ein guter Mensch ..." in Prolog im Himmel, the effort which ethical conduct demands is unqualifiedly declared to be a positive good (Thales' "'s ist auch wohl fein, Ein wackrer Mann zu seiner Zeit zu sein"). If there is, then, a gratuitous tribute to Aristophanes in "Gott und Welt," it is not because Goethe was thinking of *The Birds*, but because he had by 1825 determined that the part of *Faust* in which he would use mythopoetically his concept of metamorphosis was to contain the Aristophanic counterpart of the Euripidean element already embodied in the "Helena."

Its very title indicates that the "Klassische Walpurgisnacht," like the "Helena," is a phantasmagoria. Loosely analogous to the romantic "Walpurgisnacht" of *Faust I* both in structure and in its function as dramatic revelation of Faust's feverish inner confusion at a critical moment in his development, it is above all else constructed of motifs from ancient Greek and Roman folklore that correspond to those of Northern folklore and superstition in its romantic counterpart. Since Düntzer, unfortunately, *Faust* commentators and critics have been so concerned with elucidating the classical allusions and the ideological connections with Goethe's total world outlook that they have usually lost sight of the fundamental artistic design of the "Klassische Walpurgisnacht"—what might be called the Aristophanic dramatic pattern of all that falls between Erichtho's opening monologue and Mephisto's departure for Hell. Indeed, literal-minded critics and editors have obscured the uninterrupted flow of the action of this, the longer part of the "Klassische Walpurgisnacht," by insisting that it be read as four distinct scenes ("Pharsalische Felder," "Am obern Peneios," "Am untern Peneios," and "Am obern Peneios *wie zuvor*"); and stage directions which reflect their concern with naturalistic geography have even been interpolated in such otherwise reliable editions of *Faust* as those of Erich Schmidt (Jubiläums-Ausgabe), the Welt-Goethe, and Trunz.[9] For some unknown reason the equally natural stage direction "Ein Tempel bei Pydna" has never been added after line 7462—although perhaps only because it is impossible to reconcile the geography of this part of

[9] For the textual-critical arguments against these interpolations, see H. G. Fiedler, *Textual Studies of Goethe's Faust* (Oxford, 1946), pp. 57-64.

Walpurgisnight with the fact that Pydna is north of Olympus, not south, as Goethe's text would imply.

The first, larger section of the "Klassische Walpurgisnacht" is, then, best thought of as performed with the *mise en scène simultanée* of the Attic stage, with only the simplest theatrical machinery needed to suggest changes of milieu—machinery not very extensive even for a quasi-naturalistic production, in view of the semidarkness in which the action takes place. As in Aristophanic comedy, which in this respect does not differ from Attic tragedy, the scenes are almost exclusively exterior ones, the exception being the glimpse of Manto "inwendig träumend" after line 7470, which is a stage effect as simple as that which Euripides and Aristophanes expected when their texts called for a glimpse into a door of the façade of the skene; what stage props are visually demanded by the exterior scenes fall into the category of simple ones which even the Attic stage could provide with its eccyclema. (The objection may be raised that in *Faust II*—witness the "Mummenschanz" of the preceding act—Goethe seems to write for a realistic proscenium stage, but it may be countered that, until "Des Gegenkaisers Zelt," the action of the fourth act also demands a simultaneous stage set, as the stage direction after line 10296 makes clear. In any event, "Vorspiel auf dem Theater"—which Goethe did *not* cut out in his greatly abbreviated stage version of Part I—would seem to have among its several functions[10] that of accustoming a *Faust* audience to theatrical variety, including occasionally a stark theatrical simplicity no longer admired by popular taste at the beginning of the nineteenth century but one well illustrated by its own bare stage.)

There is thus evidence that Goethe was much interested in and much admired Aristophanes at the time of the composition of the "Klassische Walpurgisnacht." There is good reason to believe, on the basis of textual-critical arguments and in light of the deliberate compositional variety which characterizes *Faust* as a whole, that an important part of the Walpurgisnight is phantasmagoria—and it is obvious that much of this phantasmagoria is comic and satiric, best staged in an adaptation of the theatrical style of Attic comedy.

Two questions must still be answered, however: Is it probable that Goethe expected the Aristophanic *theatrical* quality of sections of the Walpurgisnight to be recognized as such? (That there are passages quite Aristophanic in tone and substance has long been recognized, though not excessively emphasized.) And is there any evidence that Goethe had reason to expect such recognition as he began to execute this part of the text of *Faust?* The second question can be answered

[10] See my "A Reconsideration of some Unappreciated Aspects of the Prologues and Early Scenes in Goethe's 'Faust,'" *MLR*, XLVII (1952), 362-373, esp. 363-366.

with an unqualified affirmative, not only because of the wide popularity of comedy labeled "Aristophanic" and sometimes even formally Aristophanic (Platen!) during the romantic period, but because Wieland—and no doubt others—had specifically commented on the element of Aristophanic "Unflätigkeit" in the romantic Walpurgisnight.[11] The answer to the first question is also affirmative, for we shall now see that in both theme and motif the "Klassische Walpurgisnacht" is in so many ways directly indebted to Aristophanes that anyone moderately well read in classical literature (in an age when the tyranny of Greece over Germany was still very near its greatest height) would inevitably be reminded again and again of Attic comedy—and of no other "classical" literary form, let alone any postclassical one—as he read it or heard it performed.

Although the stage direction "Pharsalische Felder" can—unfortunnately, as we have seen—be interpreted with naturalistic literalness, it in fact describes a land of the dead, a Hades with non-Elysian fields populated by creatures from the underworld and by shades from a vanished past, the neoclassical equivalent of the Christian underworld glimpsed momentarily on the Brocken in *Faust I*. The only classical drama which such a setting evokes is Aristophanes' *Frogs*, rightly described by the classical philologist Karl Reinhardt as "das einzige erhaltene Hadesdrama der Antike";[12] and the analogy between "Klassische Walpurgisnacht" and "Hadesdrama" is hardly to be overlooked if it is felt, as it seems to have been by a majority of *Faust* interpreters, that the function of the "Klassische Walpurgisnacht" is to enable Faust to bring Helena from a deeper part of its underworld to Sparta and renewed existence on earth. A few critics, however, would insist that Faust's descent to Persephone is not sufficiently developed in the final text to warrant drawing much of a parallel—that Goethe's unexecuted intentions should not color our reading of the Walpurgisnight. These critics may rightly point out that in the Walpurgisnight as a whole the ultimate emphasis is upon Homunculus' quest for real existence. But where in classical drama do we find the quixotic quest, the utopian enterprise? In Aristophanic comedy first and foremost!

There are, however, interpreters of *Faust* who point out that even the Homunculus episodes of the Walpurgisnight do not constitute a major part of it—for them the analogy between Goethean fantasy and Aristophanic fantasy cannot be a decisive factor in persuading them to read the first, larger section of the Walpurgisnight as Aristophanic

[11] Letter to Retzer printed in 1815 (see *Faust*, Jubiläums-Ausgabe, note to line 4132).

[12] "Die klassische Walpurgisnacht: Entstehung und Bedeutung," *Antike und Abendland* [Hamburg, 1945], [I,] 133-162 (quotation, p. 134).

comedy. These interpreters, it seems to me, may all be classed as "serious-minded," although they may emphasize such different "serious" aspects of the Walpurgisnight as its mythology (myth as Faustian "Bildungserlebnis," myth as expression of Goethe's Jungian or Bachofenian "Weltbild"), its baroque elements (again "Bildungserlebnis," or else manifestation of Goethe's "Altersstil"), and its scientific ideas ("Natur und Geist," Neptunism as more acceptable to Goethe than Vulcanism, his ideas of the genesis and development of life). Some of these aspects of the Walpurgisnight were certainly very serious concerns of Goethe's; but, as we have seen, Goethe did not find comedy and seriousness incompatible. For a classical dramatic counterpart of the dispute between Thales and Anaxagoras in the Walpurgisnight it is necessary to look at Aristophanes' *Clouds*, in which Socrates is impudently ridiculed, and for a corresponding counterpart to the satiric treatment of the romantic philosophers' and mythologists' speculations on the subject of the Cabiri it is well to recall the burlesque mythology of the parabasis of his *Birds*. For all his impudence and "Unflätigkeit" Aristophanes was more often than not an earnest critic of his age and its beliefs; whatever serious themes Goethe takes up in the Walpurgisnight, he is capable of treating them with a light, Aristophanic touch.

The utopian and fantastic are blended with the comic and the burlesque both in *Faust* and in Aristophanes. Faust, Mephisto, and Homunculus arrive in the land of supernatural beings as aëronauts, and Trygaeus reaches the palace of Zeus—in *Peace*—by flying on a dung beetle. The Pharsalian Fields are an underworld, however, through which the three visitors in *Faust* move with rapid changes of place similar to the movements of Dionysus, Xanthias, and Heracles in *The Frogs;* and Faust seeks to recover Helena even as Dionysus wants to recover the incomparable Euripides. If Faust is content to be on Greek soil, Mephisto—like Dionysus' timid servant—is confessedly ill at ease amid classical monsters. These monsters, moreover, are treated in the Walpurgisnight with the same satiric and ironic levity as are supernatural beings in Aristophanic comedy. Griffons, sphinxes, sirens, and Lamiae all condescend to taunt a Mephistopheles whom they admittedly despise. The centaur Chiron condescendingly puts himself at the disposal of a strange barbarian who clearly lacks the Greek view of things Greek. And Nereus and Proteus, with comic reluctance, despite their all-too-human grouchiness and pessimism, further the quest of the novel Homunculus.

The burlesquing of the supernatural and monstrous is, of course, itself a common motif of Aristophanic comedy. The powers of Thessalian witches, represented on the Pharsalian Fields by Erichtho, become a comic motif in *The Clouds* when Strepsiades explains to Socrates that he could avoid paying his debts if he purchased a Thessalian witch

to pull the moon out of the sky (interest and debts coming due according to the lunar month); and the same motif appears in the Walpurgisnight when Anaxagoras interprets the fall of a meteor as the result of his summoning Diana-*Luna*-Hecate to his help ("So wär' es wahr, daß dich thessalische Frauen . . ."). In *The Knights* Aristophanes ridicules, among other things, the absurdity of acting on oracles; in the Walpurgisnight the oracular riddle is propounded by both a sphinx and by Mephistopheles, and the apparently favorable oracular utterance is represented by Manto's "Den lieb' ich, der Unmögliches begehrt." The very motif of Chiron's bringing Faust to Manto, "Tochter Äskulaps," so that he may be cured of his mental aberration (impulse to find Helena) recalls the irreverent treatment of temple cures in *Plutus*. Karl Reinhardt (*loc. cit.*) has pointed out in connection with *The Frogs* that "offenbar hat Aristophanes vor allem zu den Unterweltsgespenstern die so heiter-greuliche Empuse beigesteuert," and the metamorphosing spectre of that play appears on the Pharsalian Fields to taunt Mephisto; she not only has an abnormal leg, as in *The Frogs*, but is also an unwelcome competitor of the prostitute-like Lamiae—a detail not found in Hederich's *Mythologisches Lexicon*, so often the inspiration of Goethe's satirical touches in the Walpurgisnight, but one easily suggested by the description of an old and ugly prostitute of *The Ecclesiazusae* as "an Empusa with a body covered with blemishes and blotches." Certainly the use of half-human monsters for satirico-comic effect is a basic feature of Aristophanic comedy—hence such titles as *The Wasps*, *The Birds*, and *The Frogs*—and it is surely significant that the least familiar monsters of the Walpurgisnight, the Empusa and the Lamiae (cf. *Wasps*, parabasis), probably came to Goethe's attention through his reading of Aristophanes.

One weakness of modern "Aristophanic" comedies has always been that modern standards of propriety have inhibited their authors from introducing sexual obscenity. Tieck alludes to dung in *Der gestiefelte Kater*, and for this mild allusion there is the excuse of a long, popular literary tradition; but he ventures nothing of the boldness of certain passages in the Walpurgisnight of *Faust I*. Goethe, on the other hand, lets his Sphinxes maliciously address Mephistopheles with the words,

> Sprich nicht vom Herzen! das ist eitel;
> Ein lederner verschrumpfter Beutel,
> Das paßt dir eher zu Gesicht,

and does not hesitate to represent Mephisto in frank pursuit of Lamiae of whom, "Geschnürten Leibs, geschminkten Angesichts," the latter declares: "Nichts haben sie Gesundes zu erwidern." Not to cite further specific lines, it must nevertheless be noted that the motif of Homunculus' hermaphroditism, that of the Sphinxes' double-sexedness, and that of Mephisto's transvestitism upon assuming the shape of one of the Phorcides ("Man schilt mich nun, o Schmach! Hermaphroditen")

are all in the best—or worst—unadulterated Aristophanic tradition. Not only did Aristophanes' audience expect obscenities and get them: Aristophanes occasionally incorporated motifs which permitted them in the plot structure of his comedies, the best example of this being the disguising of Euripides' father-in-law as a woman so that he may spy on the Thesmophoriazusae.

Two larger aspects of the Walpurgisnight as a whole are not without important Aristophanic analogues: Faust's madness (as both Chiron and, earlier, Mephisto—"Wen Helena paralysiert, Der kommt so leicht nicht zu Verstande"—regard his quest for Helena) and the dispute between Anaxagoras and Thales. In *The Wasps* Philocleon's mad passion for jury duty is the mainspring of the comic action, the rack on which Aristophanes loosely hangs his satire, and so it is comparable to Faust's passion for Helena, which becomes the excuse for all the digressions which the Walpurgisnight admittedly contains. But, since in Aristophanic comedy the digressions often develop the essential themes with which the author is concerned, Goethe's cavalier treatment of dramatic action in the Walpurgisnight is no longer disturbing when the Aristophanic element of that section of *Faust* is recognized for what it is. As for the dispute between Anaxagoras and Thales, it is perhaps a digression in the constructive sense just characterized, and yet without it the Walpurgisnight would lack one of the standard formal features of Attic comedy, namely the agon or debate. In an Aristophanic comedy written in pseudoclassical metrical forms an agon would be little more than one additional obviously Aristophanic feature. In this Walpurgisnight, however, Goethe has used modern meters (as he did in his version of *The Birds*), and so the important place given to a debate on a theoretical issue—and one on which both sides are demonstrated to be partly wrong: appearance of Seismos, fall of meteorite—is not only in the best comic tradition of dramatic irony, but is also a final means of insisting that the fundamental "Aristophanism" of the Walpurgisnight shall not be overlooked.[13]

It would be absurd to claim that ability to recognize the Aristophanic elements of the "Klassische Walpurgisnacht" will suddenly make this section of *Faust* transparently simple. In the scene "Felsbuchten des Ägäischen Meers" it is also important, for instance, to recognize Goethe's debt to the tradition of theatrical cantata and to the tradition

[13] F. E. Hirsch, "'Aristophanische' Wortfügungen in der Sprache des 19. Jahrhunderts," *Zft. f. dt. Wortforschung*, XII (1910), 241-248, draws his examples chiefly from Nestroy, Glasbrenner, Platen, and Vischer's *Faust III*, although *Faust II*, "Klassische Walpurgisnacht," speech of "Die Kraniche des Ibykus," contains such eminently "Aristophanic" compounds as "Flügelflatterschlagen" and "Fetthauchkrummbeinschelme." F. Förster's report of a conversation with Goethe on Aug. 25, 1831 shows that Goethe felt them to be such: "Die Berliner Sprachverderber sind . . . die einzigen, in denen noch eine nationelle Sprachentwickelung bemerkbar ist, z.B. Butterkellertreppengefalle, das ist ein Wort, wie es Aristophanes nicht gewagter hätte bilden können" (Biedermann,[2] IV, 386, cited by Grumach, I, 308-309).

of theatrical masque and opera.[14] But simply not to read the Walpurgisnight in the expectation of following the personal fortunes of Faust is in large measure to be able to read it with appreciation of what it really is—a phantasmagoria on themes and motifs intimately bound up with the view of life to which Faust in some measure attains and which Goethe is expressing in *Faust*, at this point with the aid of Aristophanic comedy. Even the charge that the "Klassische Walpurgisnacht" is "oppressively learned" (W. H. Bruford, *Theatre, Drama and Audience in Goethe's Germany*) loses much of its weight if it is remembered that pedantry and fantastic speculation are themselves objects of satire in the episode of the Cabiri. It is understandable that E. M. Butler, after having immersed herself in the fine points of Northern folklore and occultism long enough to produce three solid volumes on *Ritual Magic*, *The Myth of the Magus*, and *The Fortunes of Faust*, should assert on returning to the Walpurgisnight that it "contains so many recondite mythological allusions that one feels bewildered and out of one's depth" (*Fortunes*, Cambridge, 1952, p. 257); but for one who comes to it from the reading of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and, above all, Aristophanes its allusions and figures are almost all completely familiar.[15] A knowledge of Greek drama and moderate familiarity with the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* make every direct classical allusion *in the dramatic text*—as opposed to some which are simply stage-direction substitutes for detailed instructions to actor, director, or costumer—comprehensible, with the one important exception of the Cabiri. And, since the Cabiri were the subjects of lively speculation and controversy among philologians, mythologists, and "Naturphilosophen" in Goethe's day, Goethe can hardly be condemned for having failed to realize that they would once again fall into relative obscurity and become as it were the property of classical scholars only. I therefore agree wholeheartedly with Henri Lichtenberger's summing up of the question of the "obscurity" of the classical Walpurgisnight: "le reproche d'obscurité n'est guère mieux fondé que celui d'érudition encombrante et touffue."[16]

For a well-read contemporary of Goethe's, in an age when German Graecophilia was greatest if not most "gründlich," the "Klassische Walpurgisnacht" should have been immediately accessible. But it had

[14] Reinhardt, pp. 154-155 and note 42, points out that the motif of "Doriden als Retterinnen" seems to be the invention of K. W. Ramler (in the cantata *Ino*), and draws attention to Dryden's *Albion and Albanius*, an opera text in which Venus and Albanius appear "in a great scallop-shell . . . drawn by dolphins" (see *Works*, ed. Scott and Saintsbury, VII, 279); in a study of Goethe and Calderón (*GR*, XXVIII, 1953, 83-98) I seek to show that Calderonian drama is even more important for this scene than either Witkowski or Beutler has suggested.

[15] This is easily verified by checking them against the "Glossary" of *The Complete Greek Drama*, ed. W. J. Oates and Eugene O'Neill, Jr. (New York, 1938). Allusions familiar from the *Odyssey* (cf. next sentence of text), but none familiar from Greek drama, are recorded by Thalmayr, p. 169.

[16] See his edition of *Faust: Deuxieme partie* (Paris, n.d.), p. lxxxix.

the misfortune to find its first readers in decades of very different intellectual concerns from those which had inspired Goethe's choice of form and motifs. What was not understood seemed obscure—intentionally so—and so the myth of the difficulty of understanding the classical Walpurgisnight became firmly established before subsequent generations, less hostile to Goethe, had a chance to read *Faust II* without prejudice. It is surely ironic that even in the present century, in Hille's account of Germany comedy under the influence of Aristophanes, Friedrich Vischer's *Faust III* should be discussed as an Aristophanic comedy without any hint, either in connection with that discussion or elsewhere in Hille's monograph, that there are obviously Aristophanic elements in the work which Vischer Aristophanically parodied.[17]

Harvard University

[17] It is unfortunate that Georges Dalmeyda (*Gœthe et le drame antique*, Paris, 1908), a thoughtful and thorough critic, should have been so concerned with the theme of tragedy as to pass over the "Klassische Walpurgisnacht" with little more than a bare mention in his otherwise excellent study. The tendency to emphasize only Goethe's early interest in Aristophanes, as established by Süss, is still apparent in P. Friedlander, "Aristophanes in Deutschland," *Die Antike*, VIII (1932), 229-253 and IX (1933), 81-104. No light is shed on the theme of the foregoing study either by E. Maass' *Goethe und die Antike* or, more surprising, by V. Valentin's *Die klassische Walpurgisnacht*, a monograph purporting to be "eine litterarhistorisch-ästhetische Untersuchung." How little attention indeed has been paid to the form of the Walpurgisnight—and how much to unconcrete speculation apropos of it—is clear from Ada M. Klett, *Der Streit um 'Faust II' seit* 1900 [sc. *bis 1938*] (Jenaer Germanistische Forschungen, Bd. 33, Jena 1939), pp. 39-41.

BOOK REVIEWS

LA CRISI DELL'EROE NEL ROMANZO VITTORIANO. By Mario Praz. Florence: Sansoni, 1952. 457 p.

Mario Praz, in his study of *La carne, la morte e il diavolo nella letturatura romantica*, examined the essential characteristics of a "romantic" sensibility in nineteenth-century literature; in his new critical study he turns to a very different nineteenth-century phenomenon, the "Victorian" sensibility. He is concerned here more singly than in the earlier work with British writers, but the basic framework is still the larger Western European culture. Victorianism is interpreted as the peculiarly English counterpart of the nineteenth-century continental sensibility known as "Beidermeier." The Germanic Biedermeier era has been described as the gradual assimilation of the rich spiritual conquests achieved by the earlier romantics into a tranquil, bourgeois *Gemütlichkeit*. Praz shows how a parallel attenuation of romantic intensity in certain early nineteenth-century English writers moved toward the quiet, comfortable, middle-class conformism which became the dominant tenor of the Victorian epoch.

To find the full historical background for this Biedermeier-Victorian spirit, however, he goes beyond literary precursors like Wordsworth and Lamb, indeed beyond literature altogether, into the field of painting. It is his initial contention that this particular nineteenth-century literary development can be completely understood only by reference to the tradition of Dutch genre painting; and the subsequent excursion into the interrelationships of literature and the visual arts eventually illuminates not only important nineteenth-century literary works but also certain basic concepts—realism, democratic leveling, antiheroism—which extend from their literary application into the general cultural orientations of the modern era.

Praz demonstrates that certain striking innovations in the subjects and techniques of Dutch painting, which were introduced by Van Eyck in the fifteenth century and fully developed in the seventeenth, revealed a new social and philosophical attitude which only later was to find a full literary expression, in the realistic novel of the nineteenth century. The paintings of seventeenth-century Dutch artists no longer presented idealized warriors and saints, but instead realistic bourgeois interiors, with detailed emphasis upon the material appurtenances and everyday activities of middle-class life. Praz distinguishes two important contrasting tendencies in this genre painting which correspond to two divergent treatments of similar subject matter in the nineteenth century novel—on the one hand melodramatic sentiment and on the other a lyric sublimation of the intimate. While Terborch, Pieter Van Hooch, and Vermeer suffused their realistic bourgeois scenes with a terrestrial serenity which evokes a kind of eternal spiritual resonance, other painters like Jan Steen and Gabriel Metsu turned to the treatment of humor and pathos, of the anecdotal and the moralistic in genre painting. The development of the latter qualities is traced through the eighteenth century, with Greuze in France and Hogarth in England, up to the triumph of anecdote and sentiment in popular nineteenth-century painting, represented in England by such artists as W. P. Frith and Sir Edwin Landseer. Painting had become more a literary than a pictorial medium, and, as Praz illustrates by the initial subordination of Dickens' prose to Cruikshank's drawings, various artists had already perfected a happy formula for what certain writers were trying to render in literature.

Although these particular interpretations of developments in genre painting, so perceptively established in the introduction, are for the most part utilized im-

plicitly rather than explicitly in the analysis of literary figures, the general theme of the relationship between literature and the visual arts re-enters frequently to illuminate the discussion of individual writers. It is seen, for example, in the comparison drawn by Sir Walter Scott between a scene in *The Antiquary* and the genre paintings of David Wilkie, in Thackeray's abhorrence of the French classical school of David and his admiration for works of Frith and Landseer, in Trollope's preference for the realistic matrons of Rembrandt as against the idealized madonnas of Raphael. But more important than this direct evidence of the influence of particular painters upon particular writers is the implicit demonstration that the preoccupation of genre painters with the trivial details of everyday life, with ordinary men rather than with the noble or the heroic, represented the same evaluation of human life which brought about the gradual *imborghesimento* of romanticism in English literature and the apotheosis of the antiheroic in the Victorian novel.

In the section dealing with seven transitional figures between romanticism and Victorianism, the analysis of Wordsworth is especially valuable. This poet, traditionally considered as the founding father of the English romantic movement, was not even mentioned in Praz's earlier work on romanticism, where *la sensibilità erotica* formed the center of attention; in this new study he becomes the most important English predecessor of the Victorian-Biedermeier spirit. Though Praz is, of course, not the first to note Wordsworth's divergences from the pattern common to other romantic writers, he contributes new insights through his analysis of the basically Biedermeier spirit in Wordsworth, displayed in his return from his former enthusiasm for France, for the French Revolution, for Annette Vallon, to the plain, wholesome beauties of English hearths and English maidens (the "Lucy" poems), and in his continuing preference for the small, intimate world of family affection. Of central importance to Praz's later interpretation of Victorian novelists is Wordsworth's search for the deepest spiritual meaning in the lives of the simple and humble rather than the great and the heroic, and his stern answer to romantic rebelliousness in "Ode to Duty" and in other poems, where nature is the symbol not of liberty (as it is for a romantic like Shelley) but of law. The stress upon the nonromantic manifestations in Wordsworth is so forceful, indeed, that the resulting picture might by itself raise the question of his right to be designated a romantic at all. Praz does point out a significant difference between Wordsworth and the bourgeois Victorians—the latter shared his taste for humble subjects, but not his desire to find in these a transcendental vision. But this general search by Wordsworth for a higher reality, for the ineffable vision both in nature and in the experiences of humble human beings, is not explicitly interpreted by Praz as a defining romantic characteristic, by which Wordsworth may be linked (as in C. M. Bowra's *The Romantic Imagination)* to other writers like Keats or Poe who sought in their various ways a transcendental plane. Yet, although Praz is not concerned to define the pattern in Wordsworth which does remain romantic, he clearly demonstrates that the Biedermeier and antiheroic aspects formed another important pattern.

The outlines of this are then shown to exist in several other writers whose traditional romantic label needs closer examination. From a wealth of evidence in the essays and letters of Charles Lamb the conclusion emerges that it was simply a Biedermeier temperament rather than the restrictive force of external circumstances which led Lamb to withdraw from youthful romantic aspirations to the quiet, intimate fireside existence which suffuses the essays and made them so immensely popular with the Victorian public. And two disparate planes are found in De Quincey—the familiar romantic figure with his opium-induced visions, and the less-recognized bourgeois Victorian paterfamilias, with his moralistic strictures

upon Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*—the two planes mingling fantastically in *The English Mail-Coach*, where an idyllic Biedermeier painting turns into nightmare.

From these early nineteenth-century writers, Praz proceeds to examine the Victorian spirit in full flower, as reflected in four major mid-Victorian novelists. In the detailed re-evaluation of Dickens, the novelist's basic weakness is ascribed to extravagances of sensationalism on the one hand and of sentimentality on the other, and his still-enduring strength to the inspired humor in his secondary characters and to the profusion of picturesque scenes, squalid or comic or pathetic, which make his pages a series of genre paintings. The reaffirmation of the shocking blindness shown in Dickens' most sentimental effusions seems a salutary antidote against any new attempt to sanctify even little Nell as a martyr to twentieth-century callousness; yet more attention might have been given to those parts of his works in which the sentiments of family love and compassionate generosity, even with Dickens' lavish oversimplification, still seems to arouse deep-rooted emotive responses, so that the story of Scrooge and Tiny Tim moves into a kind of modern myth, where the sentiment becomes archetypal.

The relation of Dickens' novels, with their admixture of the grotesque and the sensational and with the presence of at least nominal heroes, to the central theme of the Biedermeier-Victorian sensibility and its antiheroism remains complex and even ambiguous. But in the section on Thackeray the main lines of Praz's argument are more sharply focussed. A perceptive analysis of this novelist's childhood and adolescence supports Praz's view of Thackeray as the affectionate, sentimental bourgeois imperfectly concealed under a protective covering of cynicism. The much-vaunted moral realism of such a personality, Praz shows, never entailed a study of human vice so truly frank or searching that it could really disturb the nineteenth-century middle-class public, who found his disenchanted tone of irony mildly and pleasantly therapeutic, coming as it did from someone who remained the perfect Victorian gentleman. The evidence for this view is ample, though in the one case of *Vanity Fair* Thackeray's irony seems underestimated, and the comparison with Frédéric Soulié's *Les Mémoires du diable* and Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* is not entirely appropriate. The failure to specify Becky Sharp's actual sins appears less of a blemish than Praz considers it to be, when the story of Becky and Amelia is seen, not as a simple illustration of virtue down-trampled and vice triumphant (as in Soulié) or of a woman's disintegration (as in Flaubert), but as an increasingly complex contrast wherein Amelia's virtues grow shabbier with time and an emerging basic selfishness brings her curiously close to Becky. And Becky in turn, with her clear vision and her audacious adaptability to circumstances, is eventually presented with a wry admiration which has little in common with Flaubert's attitude toward Emma Bovary.

The central topic, however, is Thackeray's antiheroism—his denial that men in real life can live on a heroic plane, his determination to play toward his fictional characters the role of the valet to whom heroic pretense is vain, his cult of mediocrity as epitomized by "The Small-Beer Chronicle." The penetrating analysis of this aspect of Thackeray leads smoothly into a sympathetic and wide-ranging evaluation of Trollope's novels. Here Praz finds a continuation of Thackerean characteristics, but with strikingly fewer weaknesses. The sentimentality, the moralism, the reticence diminish, as Trollope creates a truer realism in his pictures of middle-class Victorian society; the antiheroism takes on a positive note, as Trollope consciously creates characters neither perfect in beauty or intellect nor wholly evil, and as he discovers the most solid human virtue in precisely the ordinary, nonheroic personality.

In the final study on George Eliot, the further development of these attitudes toward the heroic takes on a deeper meaning, as important themes from the earlier

parts of the study reappear with a new climactic clarity. Eliot's sympathy with Wordsworth's search for the most meaningful values in humble life and her admiration for the seventeenth-century Dutch genre painters are shown to lie behind her determination to find a deep moral import and a special kind of beauty in ordinary persons and scenes. Moreover, Eliot's realism moves beyond Trollope's to approach what Praz calls *intimismo*, a transfiguration of the "sweet monotony in which each thing is loved and known" into an intensely spiritual lyric vision. And this is the same culmination of minute realism which genre painting had once achieved in the canvases of Vermeer. The most striking concept here is that a democratization of art—the broader phenomenon behind the Biedermeier-Victorian *imborghesimento* of romanticism which Praz has traced—can thus produce a new kind of profundity: "mancando eroi ed eroine, l'attenzione si concentra sui particolari della vita comune, approfondisce questi aspetti; le cose più dozzinali, a esser guardate intensamente, acquistano un significato rilevante, una loro bellezza intima, più profonda pel fatto stesso di essere in sordina" (p. 351). And in Eliot's search for the imponderable significance with which our perceptions and our memories can invest the most commonplace experience, the decline of the hero in literature is followed by the uncovering of a rich and complex interior life in the nonheroic individual. With the investigation of this world, the disenchanted realism in the nineteenth-century novel was to rise to a new enchantment in the intimistic novel, exemplified in the works of two men whom George Eliot had deeply impressed—Henry James and Marcel Proust.

This final extension of central motifs into the twentieth century contributes much to the value of the work. Not only does it illuminate Victorian sensibility and the peculiar forms it assumed in nineteenth-century literature, but it also leads to a fuller comprehension of historical changes in concepts of what constitutes a hero. Through the imaginative examination of genre painting and its counterpart in the realistic novel, Praz reveals the impact of an evolving middle-class, secular, democratic social structure upon the traditional views of the heroic. And he provides a foundation for further studies of the treatment of the hero in modern literature, as this reflects the modern narrowing and redirecting of opportunities for heroic action.

ROLAND BALL

University of Oregon

ENGLISH LITERATURE IN GERMANY. By Lawrence Marsden Price. Berkeley-Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1953. viii, 548 p.

When *The Reception of English Literature in Germany* appeared in 1932, one of its chief reviewers declared that "in its main lines Price's work will not have to be done again; it will stand indefinitely, a monument to his industry, his good judgment, his scholarly intelligence," and added, very wisely, that no single reviewer could sit in judgment on the work as a whole. To these opinions the present writer wholeheartedly subscribes.

We learn from Professor Price's Introduction that the intention of this new edition remains the same, viz., to define the successive stages in the transition, in England and Germany, from "Middle Age tutelage" to "modern free thought" by considering the qualities of certain English men of letters and observing what they meant to writers in Germany—the prime assumption being the historical fact that England passed through certain stages of this transition earlier than Germany. It is not an intention to *prove* anything but to *exhibit the facts* within a defined field.

The plan of the book is therefore, in essence, the same as before—a systematic

bibliography (comprising books, articles, and reviews) as a repository of factual evidence, preceded by a series of systematic discourses based on the evidence collected in the bibliography. Full indexes of authors and investigators are appended. The differences between the two editions are of two kinds: (1) corrections, suppressions, and additions, and (2) modifications of the ground plan and reconsideration of views previously expressed. The new Table of Contents is as follows: Part I. Reformation and Renaissance (two chapters). Part II. Rationalism, Sentimentalism, and Genius (fourteen chapters). Part III. Shakespeare in Germany (four chapters). Part IV. The Era of World Literature (six chapters).

The defects of the 1932 edition to which Professor Price draws attention are really only one—the impossibility of prophesying in 1932 what relevant additions would be made to our knowledge of the subject by 1952. The new edition takes account of the results of the research of the past twenty years. Four hundred and fifty items have been added to the bibliography and digested in the text. In particular, Professor Price wishes "to revoke the greater part of all that was said in regard to the art of the English Comedians in Germany in the seventeenth century." Those of us who, some thirty or forty years ago, turned the pages of the so-called *Englische Comedien und Tragedien* certainly thought them a little odd but we left it to Nordström and Fredén to find the facts and to Professor Price to direct our laggard attention to the work of these two scholars. The second chapter of the first part now gives a much revised view of the influence of the English comedians in Germany. In Part IV a wider chapter on "The Victorian Novel" replaces the former chapter on "Dickens"; the "American Novel" is now more exactly defined as "The American Frontier Novel"; and the final chapter, formerly headed somewhat tentatively "The Twentieth Century," now boldly embraces the first fifty years, with the title "New Concepts of Democracy."

Another reviewer of the 1932 edition suggested that more attention might have been given to English influence on Germany in the seventeenth century. Professor Price has accepted this advice and has incidentally indicated the importance of Holland as a mediator of new ideas. Chapter I of the old edition, "The Seventeenth Century," has now become the first chapter, "Scholars, Courtiers and Churchmen," of a new Part I.

A third defect of the old book, in Professor Price's opinion, was an inadequate treatment of Shakespeare in Germany; the new edition includes a fuller account of the translations and adaptations of Shakespeare's plays from the time of Wieland to the present day.

In a work of this kind, even the most careful proofreading will leave a few errors undetected, e.g., Introduction, p. 2, middle paragraph, the three references to the bibliography are all incorrect; p. 10, end of middle paragraph, for "Sidney's style" read "Barclay's style"; p. 28, note 44, for 129 read 127; p. 56, note 15, for 1745 read 1754; p. 248, second paragraph, second line, for 1776 read 1767. There are a few minor errors of fact: p. 8, bottom, Bacon was not associated with Theodor Haake in the founding of the Royal Society (1662)—he had nothing to do with it, having died in 1626; p. 10, bottom, the elegiac distichs of John Owen are not Alexandrines; p. 13, fourth paragraph, Scaliger—this is Joseph Justus Scaliger, son of the *Italian* scholar, Julius Caesar Scaliger. In other places, a little amplification would be helpful, e.g., p. 8, second paragraph, "the love story reached its climax in *Amadis of Gaul*"; "love story" is an unsatisfactory epitome of the whole category of "romance of personal adventure," beginning with the *Odyssey*, as distinct from the national or tribal epic represented by the *Iliad*. On p. 89, second paragraph, the date of publication of Shaftesbury's *Characteristics* (1711) should be inserted. Thomas Percy (p. 136) did not become Bishop of Dromore until 1782. The *Acta eruditorum*, p. 87, note 5, are worthy of a place in the

general bibliography. There is a strange error in the reference to Fynes Moryson in the bibliography, p. 402, no. 73; the title of his book is not *Travels in Germany*, but *An Itinerary . . . containing his Ten Yeeres Travell through the Twelve Dominions of Germany, Bohmerland . . . etc., etc.* There is an excellent reprint in four volumes, published by James MacLehose and Sons, Glasgow, in 1907-08, but this has nothing to do with Charles Hughes' *Shakespeare's Europe* (1906). This latter book is an entirely original edition of MS material in Corpus Christi College, Oxford, which Moryson deliberately omitted from his published *Itinerary*.

"The aim of this work," says Professor Price, "is not to prove anything, but merely to counteract the tendency of confining the study of German and English literature along nationalistic lines and to make easier the first steps of those who are inclined to strive for the same goal." In spite of this authoritative declaration, Professor Price has proved *something;* he has proved that certain German writers, at different times or simultaneously, and in different degrees, were noticeably influenced by their reading of *some* English authors. But what is the goal towards which Professor Price thinks that others may be inclined to strive? Does he mean that other specialists may wish—and we hope that they will—to write exactly parallel volumes on, say, French literature in Germany, Spanish literature in Germany, and so on? The information they will bring is bound to be instructive even though they observe the exact limits of the volume before us.

But the next question is: How much further can we go? Professor Price's book, and the hypothetical volumes just suggested, do not and cannot show the influence of a foreign literature on the general German reading public, i.e., on the *nonwriters*. Again, many of the German authors who figure prominently in this book as borrowers from English authors responded more or less readily to the impact of other foreign literatures. And when we have explored all this, does there not still remain an intangible residue of culture for which there are no authentic "Quellen"? Goethe certainly admitted to Eckermann on December 3, 1824: "Unsere Romane, unsere Trauerspiele, woher haben wir sie denn, als von Goldsmith, Fielding und Shakespeare?" But this admission is subject to the overriding pronouncement, made to Eckermann on December 17, 1828, to the effect that the search for the sources of culture in the mind of the individual is just as futile as would be the attempt to estimate the number and quality of the animals consumed by the individual for his physical sustenance. "Ich verdanke den Griechen und Franzosen viel, ich bin Shakespeare, Sterne und Goldsmith Unendliches schuldig geworden. Allein damit sind die Quellen meiner Kultur nicht nachgewiesen; es würde ins Grenzenlose gehen und wäre auch nicht nötig. Die Hauptsache ist, daß man eine Seele habe, die das Wahre liebt und die es aufnimmt, wo sie es findet."

A reviewer quoted this passage in 1933, but it will bear repetition. Professor Price is a true disciple of Goethe in this matter; he perceives and defines the possibilities with magisterial authority, and within carefully drawn limits has produced a *Grundriß* which should become the natural repository for all additions to knowledge in this field.

G. Waterhouse

Queen's University, Belfast

The World through Literature. Edited by Charlton Laird. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1951. xviii, 506 p.

The avowed purpose of *The World through Literature* is to promote international understanding by placing essays on the world's great literature side by side and to have each of these essays, in turn, reveal something of the individual nations' "thought, temper, and essential nature." The means employed to this end by Professor Charlton Laird, the editor, in the spirit of the late Professor Arthur

E. Christy, who conceived the idea of this book, was to have specialists in the different literatures write comprehensive essays on their particular field. Such a procedure would give any book a varied character. *The World through Literature* is a kaleidoscopic maze of approaches, styles, and points of view. The literary quality of the contributions ranges from excellent to very poor; the scope of the essays, from all-embracing to minute.

Among the contributors, Professors Shao Chang Lee, Howard R. Huse, and the late Rudolph Schevill best solve the problem of presenting a vast body of knowledge in limited space without using a mechanical handbook style. Professor Shao Chang Lee manages to make critical appreciations of the masterpieces of Chinese literature, and still sketches in an elegant framework of the history and customs of China for the uninformed Western reader. Exquisite taste and wide reading shine through Professor Huse's presentation of the highlights of French literature. The maze of Spanish literature is clarified by means of the tight organization and comprehensive economy of Professor Schevill's essay.

In a less eminent degree, Professors Philo Buck, Younghill Kang, John Morrison, Eisig Silberschlag, Adolph Benson, J. A. Posin, and Madaline W. Nichols each do justice to the purposes of *The World through Literature*. Philo Buck's comprehensive survey of Indian literature is marred by a certain diffuseness and tendency to stray from the discussion of general trends. Professor Silberschlag presents a challenging and deeply thought-out essay on the fortunes of Hebrew literature. It is unfortunate that the clarity and beauty of his discussion of the Bible and the Talmud is blurred by his attempt to treat minor movements with equal emphasis and in great detail. Professors Younghill Kang and John Morrison highlight important phases of Japanese literature. The alternation of detailed examples and sweeping generalities gives this contribution an uneven character. The student of comparative literature will find in Professor Benson's essay a mine of valuable information on literary relationships between the Scandinavian literatures and other literary worlds. Little attempt is made, however, to dissociate critical, philosophical, or even scientific works produced in Scandinavia from those belonging to belles-lettres. Often the discussion of relatively small repercussions of foreign genres or movements in Scandinavia occupies space that should be devoted to more extensive considerations of major authors. Professor Nichols, writing in an unrestrained and often prolix style, makes an interesting survey of Latin American literature. Slavic literature is discussed by Professor Posin, with emphasis on more modern literary productions and their sociopolitical background; an unfortunate division of chapter headings will make the reader feel, for instance, that Tolstoy and Dostoevsky were concerned only with the quarrel between "Westernites and Slavophils," Turgenev only with "Economic and Agrarian Problems."

Other contributors to *The World through Literature* found it necessary to select a central philosophical, social, or literary concept and build a survey of their special literature around it. While Professor Bayard Quincy Morgan's article on German literature is very comprehensive, he makes a deliberate effort to have literary phenomena show forth "the basic insecurity of the German temperament, the unstable equilibrium in which the German is condemned to live, and the unresolved dissonances in his soul which help to make him an internationally problematic character." One has to agree with Professor Morgan's point of view to find significance, for instance, in his analogy between Nietzsche's insanity and the disintegration of the *Grossraum* of the German mind *(sic)* in 1933. Professor Giuseppe Prezzolini, on the other hand, uses an uneven survey of Italian literature to promote his idea that systematized literary history is "a crutch to memory . . . very useful for classroom purposes." This seems to me the only coherent thought in an essay which throws about vast terms like "universality" and

"love," loosely connects them with a chronological list of Italian authors, and refers us to the "better encyclopedias" for "a general design of Italian literature." Perhaps the least satisfactory contribution is Professor Paul Radin's article on primitive literature. Sociologists, anthropologists, and folklorists may find this essay an extremely important one. The general reader or student of literature, uninitiated into the meanings of "societal structure" or "mythical mentality," learns very little from it. Professor Radin would have done better to explain his interesting citations from primitive literature and spend less time in refuting or confuting various anthropological theories.

The World through Literature also contains three essays which are completely foreign to its general character, though each one is of some merit, individually considered. It seems especially deplorable that the article on Greek and Latin literature should be one of them. Professor Allen R. Benham very ably traces the problems of inspiration and imitation, of the relation between poetry and reality, of the poet's responsibility, of genre, and of the "proper language for artistic uses" as they appear in Plato and Aristotle, and are later discussed by Horace and Longinus. This admirable statement teaches us much about classical criticism, more about ancient philosophy, but nothing whatever about Greek or Latin literatures. Since this essay follows in order after the discussions of primitive, Oriental, Near Estern, and Hebrew literatures, the more naive reader will suppose that the roots of Western vernacular literature lie among the Eskimos, in the Orient, and in the Middle East, owing only their form to the efforts of Athens and Rome. In a quite different way, Professors Edwin E. Calverley and Edward J. Jurji fail to discuss Near Eastern literature adequately. Neither Professor Calverley's theological résumé of Islamic teachings nor Professor Jurji's learned survey of Near Eastern history and politics yields more than statistical information on matters of literary concern.

The World through Literature is a book of uneven merit which does not quite fulfill its stated purpose. It is a miscellany of important literary opinions. Brilliant surveys like those of Professors Huse and Schevill can be used to advantage as outlines for survey courses or leisure reading. Other essays, like those of Professors Silberschlag and Benson, can be of service to the scholar. But to those who expect from this volume what the title promises—a view of the world through literature—we can only say: *caveat emptor!*

Wolfgang Bernard Fleischmann

University of North Carolina

The Frenzied Poets: Andrey Biely and the Russian Symbolists. By Oleg A. Maslenikov. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1952. xvii, 234 p.

In this eminently readable book Professor Maslenikov set out to tell the story of the Russian Symbolist movement by focusing on the life and work of one of its leading representatives, Andrei Bely. This choice of the protagonist was appropriate enough. Bely was not the greatest poet of the period—this distinction belongs indubitably to Alexander Blok—but he was the most original novelist of Russian Symbolism as well as its vocal and influential spokesman. In his many-sided activity, encompassing lyric poetry and imaginative prose, philosophical essays and studies in versification, Bely reflected more fully than any of his contemporaries divergent strands in the fabric of the Russian Symbolist movement. With his bewildering inner contradictions and his frenzied search for spiritual salvation through art, he was, in D. S. Mirsky's words, "a typical expression of the Symbolist mentality." Moreover, Bely left behind an impressive fragment of

an autobiography which, in spite of many factual inaccuracies and partisan distortions, offers a suggestive picture of Russia's intellectual and artistic life at the end of the century.

In his absorbing narrative Professor Maslenikov puts Bely's brilliant memoirs, along with other relevant materials, to effective use. The monograph traces convincingly the duality of Bely's conflict-ridden psyche back to the poet's childhood, overshadowed by a tug of war between the father, a detached and ungainly scientist, and the mother, a beautiful social butterfly. A brief account of Bely as a "man and artist" is followed by a graphic portrayal of his relations with other leading Russian Symbolists—the cold aesthete, Valeri Bryusov, the high priest of Symbolist "God-seekers," Dmitri Merezhkovsky, the scholarly *maître* of the Petersburg literati, Vyacheslav Ivanov, and finally the anguished visionary, Alexander Blok.

This "human interest" approach has several rewards. It makes for readability and vividness of presentation, it helps recreate the atmosphere of the period and highlights the factional strife within the Symbolist school—the tensions between "decadents" and "God-seekers," between Petersburg "mystical anarchists" and Moscow aesthetes.

One may add that emphasis on biography is, undoubtedly, more legitimate with regard to the Russian Symbolists than it would be, say, in discussing eighteenth-century Russian poetry. In the Symbolist era the relation between "life" and "work," between poetry and experience was, or seemed to be, organic and intimate. This connection was a two-way street. If Symbolist poetry purported to express the poet's "inner self," the latter in turn was being reshaped so as to bear witness to the higher truth of art. A poem of Blok or Bely was often not so much a record of actual experience as a lyrical scenario to be acted out in real life.

Russian Symbolism was not content to be "merely" a school of poetry. It aspired to be a metaphysics, a way of life, or rather a method of re-creating life in consonance with a heroic myth of the Artist. The Symbolists' tortured love affairs, reaching toward a maximum emotional intensity, are testimony to a desperate attempt to fuse art and reality. Some phases of Maslenikov's story, especially his account of Bely's relationship with Blok, cast an interesting light on this aspect of "Symbolist mentality."

But the biographical method has its drawbacks. For one thing, the author's concern with the "interrelations between leading personalities" (p. 29) makes the organization of the book somewhat less than streamlined. With the third part of the study divided into such chapters as "Bely and Bryusov," "Bely and Ivanov," "Bely and Blok," it became necessary to relate the key events in Bely's career in several overlapping "interpersonal" contexts. This entailed inevitably some repetition and a considerable amount of cross reference. More important still, the concentration on "life" is sometimes achieved at the expense of "work," of thorough critical analysis.

Maslenikov handles Bely's abortive love affair with Blok's wife and the resulting tension between the two leading Russian Symbolists with balance and tact. The story of this puzzling literary relationship, apart from intrinsic psychological interest, can be construed as a contribution to the understanding of the *Zeitgeist*. One wonders, however, if the amount of attention accorded the "triangle" in the chapter on Blok may not be conducive to a slight distortion of perspective. An unwary reader of *The Frenzied Poets* is apt to arrive at the conclusion that Blok's abrupt transition from the adolescent worship of the "eternally feminine" to the blasphemous irony of the middle period was due mainly to the impact of the "family drama." One cannot deny that the "drama" contributed to the acute spiritual crisis discernible in Blok's poetry around 1905. But, whether one chooses to

describe Blok's turn toward "realistic mysticism" as a shift from timid apprenticeship to a more personal and mature poetic style, or as a change from seraphic innocence to a more complex and tragic vision of life, one thing is certain—this transformation cannot be accounted for in narrowly biographical terms.

As for the principal character of *The Frenzied Poets*, his role in the Symbolist movement emerges clearly enough from Maslenikov's account. However, one could have wished a somewhat fuller discussion of Bely's remarkable prose fiction. The style and composition of such novels as *Petersburg*, *Silver Dove*, and *Kotik Letaev*, with their masterful handling of hyperboles reminiscent of Gogol, and their elaborate rhythmical patterns which make one think of Joyce, deserve a more detailed treatment than could be accorded them within the limits of Maslenikov's narrative scheme.

Another aspect of Bely's work which this reviewer would have liked to see discussed at greater length are his studies in verse structure. While not too impressive as a philosopher of art, Bely was a highly competent student of prosody and generally one of the most vigorous pioneers of systematic poetics in Russian. Professor Maslenikov acknowledges Bely's efforts in this domain rather emphatically, without, however, inquiring into the nature of his contribution. Had he done so, he would not have failed, I am sure, to qualify his statement that Bely's "first experiments in this field [poetics] laid the foundation for the Russian formalist school of criticism" (p. 81). That the Formalist theoreticians of verse were indebted to Bely for many valuable insights—even though they were not very likely to admit it themselves—can hardly be denied. But on closer inspection the differences between Bely and the Formalists appear no less striking than the similarities. Bely's normative approach to the concepts of "meter" and "rhythm," his overemphasis on scientific paraphernalia, coupled paradoxically with strong mystical leanings—all this was alien to the Formalist students of prosody and, for that matter, to more sober Symbolist theoreticians, such as Bryusov.

Speaking in more general terms, one misses in *The Frenzied Poets* a sustained discussion of the aesthetic and philosophical premises of the Russian Symbolist movement. Maslenikov does touch upon the Symbolist *Weltanschauung* in outlining the rise of the school ("Early Phases") and subsequently in summing up Bely's achievement ("Conclusions"). But here, too, the treatment is rather cursory. It is perhaps this brevity that accounts for occasional lack of precision. Thus, in discussing the impact of Bely's world view on his art, Maslenikov suggests that "Bely's philosophical idealism drives him to stress the emotional and intuitive elements over the rational." It is hardly necessary to point out that philosophical idealism per se need not favor emotions at the expense of reason. Rationalism is perfectly compatible with idealism; in fact, in its "pure" form it can be considered as one of the variants of idealist philosophy. Apparently what Maslenikov had in mind is the particular brand of idealism espoused by Bely. One may add that the equation of idealism and intuitionism implicit in the above statement makes some sense within the context of the historical situation with which we are concerned here. In early twentieth-century Russia philosophical idealism tended almost invariably to assume the aspect of irrationalism, either of lay or of religious variety. This, however, may not be immediately obvious to the reader of *The Frenzied Poets*.

It can be legitimately argued that most of these criticisms point toward a study significantly different from the one which Professor Maslenikov has written and, apparently, set out to write. It is indeed the better part of wisdom to judge a book not in terms of what the reviewer would like the author to have done, but in terms of what the author was actually trying to do. Maslenikov's monograph is not—nor was it meant to be, one assumes—a comprehensive or definitive analysis of the Russian Symbolist school. It does manage, however, to dramatize some important

aspects of the movement, and thus provides a welcome addition to the still meager literature on one of the most fascinating periods in Russian intellectual history.

VICTOR ERLICH

University of Washington

HOWELLS AND ITALY. By James L. Woodress, Jr. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1952. xvi, 223.

The study of comparative literature takes its broadest significance from its function as a part of intercultural studies, a pursuit now urgently followed on many fronts. The ardor of that pursuit reflects, of course, a number of different factors in the race between knowledge and disaster. Though this may sound at first like much too portentous an opening for the discussion of Professor James Woodress's book on *Howells and Italy*, actually, in the long view, it is not. Perhaps no question is more important today than the thorough understanding of the cultural life of the United States—both by Americans and foreigners. Yet the central examination of the American creative imagination in its comparatist and intercultural connections has scarcely begun. Hardly anyone seems even to begin to know the facts. Consequently, every sound and competent investigation of any phase of the problem becomes important both for its own particular achievement and as a pioneering effort in a direction of great promise. *Howells and Italy* is precisely such a book.

It has long been known that in the long, important, and complex literary career of William Dean Howells (1837-1920) his experiences of Italian life, speech, art, history, and literature were fundamental. To show both the nature and importance of these influences, Professor Woodress has blended in his book all the relevant ingredients: biography, the tracing of influences, literary history (in its most basic sense), the study of Howells's creative method, and critical explication. Having surveyed the biographical events of Howells's stay as American consul in Venice in 1861-65, he turns in Chapter II to a rewarding study of the writings—two travel books, *Venetian Life* (1866) and *Italian Journeys* (1867), and miscellaneous poetry and essays—which came out of the Venetian sojourn. One may say simply of this chapter that it is full of fresh information and insight. For a student of Howells it is indispensable and for the comparatist rich in potentiality. The third chapter, headed "Italian Literature" and divided into four rather disparate sections, is less evenly excellent. "Dante and Longfellow" surveys Howells's attachment to Longfellow's Dante Club and his own connections with Dante, but does not, unfortunately, really clarify the significance either to Cambridge or to Howells of that Italomania symptomized by the Dante Club. The second and fourth sections deal with "Modern Poetry," especially the backgrounds of Howells's belated *Modern Italian Poets* (1887) and briefly with "The Italian Novel" and Howells. The third, and genuinely important, section on "Goldoni and Realism" I shall treat separately in a later paragraph.

Professor Woodress's book unfolds with a triumphant acceleration in pace and interest which leads to a fine climax in the fourth and last chapter. Its first part, "Fiction 1860-81," deals most effectively with the imaginative use Howells was able to make of his Italian resources in developing almost from scratch to the mature and thoroughly arrived novelist of 1881. The heart of this is a careful examination of the roots of his first genuine novel, *A Foregone Conclusion* (1874), and those of *The Lady of the Aroostock* (1879) and *A Fearful Responsibility* (1881). Together with much new light on the novels and the creative process which produced them, we are given some canny insights into the artistic growth of

Howells to full stature as a novelist. "Italy Revisited" accurately recounts his second trip in 1882-83 and treats of the two books which came from it in 1886, *Tuscan Cities* and *Indian Summer*, the latter somewhat disappointingly, perhaps because Professor Woodress does not find the same depths of moral perception in it as I do. Penultimately comes a neatly organized summary of other significant Italianate activities and writings, and finally, a brief, hard-hitting "Conclusion."

As with everybody's books, there are things in *Howells and Italy* with which one would wish, though here never intemperately, to quarrel. Ignoring a few small questions of detail, I return to one of the most important sections in the book, "Goldoni and Realism." Aside from the problem of making oneself clear as to what the term means, there is no problem about realism more fascinating than the question of where it came from. Obviously there were both indigenous and foreign sources for American realism. But which were decisive? To which shall we turn for help in making our ideas clear? Professor Woodress does a firm and convincing job of showing that for Howells, the premier American spokesman for and a major practitioner of realism, a major source was the eighteenth-century Venetian dramatist Carlo Goldoni. What is less convincing is his tendency to claim that Howells "developed his own theory of Realism under the direct influence of the Italian dramatist" (p. 137)—or that, while Howells was in Venice, his writings moved "from Romanticism to Realism" (p. 78)—or that Goldoni, "more than any other writer, turned him from Romantic poet into prose Realist" (pp. 131-132) because "through Goldoni's eyes Howells first saw the possibilities of prose fiction based on the commonplace events of contemporary life" (p. 132). What one may object to here is not at all the confidence that Goldoni's importance to Howells's development is solidly established. It is rather that the author has fallen into the trap of claiming too much for his fine discovery. He makes Goldoni too exclusively and too immediately important. As a boy making his first efforts at fiction, and as a newspaperman in Ohio doing semifictional human-interest stuff before he came to Venice, Howells already had intimations of the "simple and commonplace" way of realism. He did move sharply toward realism while in Venice, but I suspect that he was motivated not alone by Goldoni. He was learning profoundly from his study of Venetian life and from the new, toned-down, ironic, cultural-relativistic, and antiromantic vision and literary method he developed for his travel books. Finally, he was far from a decided realist when he arrived home from Venice. Years of reading, experimenting, and garnering education from the galaxy of new-thinking young wits he met in Cambridge intervened between Venice and the Howells of *A Modern Instance*, to say nothing of the still later "Editor's Study." In the end, all this is only to say that one would agree with Professor Woodress when he says, on page 142: "It seems reasonable to conclude that Goldoni played an important part in shaping Howells's theory of Realism in fiction, and it is worth considering that Italian literature, as well as English, French, and Russian [add Spanish and Scandinavian?], may thus have contributed to the literary ground swell which washed up European Realism on the receptive shore of America."

Few criticisms are less fair than those which attack a book for not having other goals than those which it has successfully and importantly reached. Consequently it can be said only that *Howells and Italy* is not definitively the last word on the subject, because there is another side to the coin. Howells had a number of Italian correspondents: Dall'Ongaro, Fratini, Professor Messadaglia, Fra Giacomo Issaverdenz, perhaps Verga, to name only a few. Where are the letters and what of them? What reputation, vogue, or impact did he have with the Italian public, the critics, the writers? There is a nice little companion study to be made, by a student of Italian life and letters, and called, perhaps, "Howells in Italy." But if it is not

therefore the last word, Professor Woodress's *Howells and Italy* is both excellent and important.

EDWIN H. CADY

Syracuse University

INTROPUCCIÓN A LA LITERATURA MEDIEVAL ESPAÑOLA. Por Francisco López Estrada. Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1952. 175 p.

Esta obra que constituye una de las publicaciones de la serie de "Manuales" de la Biblioteca Románica Hispánica dirigida por Dámaso Alonso no es propiamente hablando una neuva historia de la literatura medieval española.[1] El autor, segùn nos informa en la Introducción, se ha propuesto esencialmente un fin metodológico al presentar a la consideración una serie de problemas fundamentales cuyo planteamiento adecuado debe guiar a los estudiosos de la literatura medieval española. Un principio claro orienta su tarea, sin embargo, desde las primeras páginas: el de que todas las cuestiones relacionadas con la inteligencia de la obra literaria deben estar subordinadas al hecho mismo de la valoración crítica. A base de esta declaración de principios, el autor queda en libertad para tratar los tradicionales temas de la "crítica histórica" ("literary history") con la seriedad que se merecen sin menoscabar por ello, en lo más mínimo, el postulado básico de su orientación espiritualista. Esto le permite, por otra parte, dedicar todo un capítulo, el VII (págs. 114-123), a las técnicas de la investigación valorativa de la literatura que hoy están dando los mejores frutos con los procedimientos de la moderna Estilística.[2] Por lo demás, al lado de los problemas que son comunes a la "crítica literaria histórica" en general, surgeon otros específicamente españoles por razón de la incidencia histórica que le cupo a España en el Medievo. Entre los primeros se encuentran todo lo relativo a bibliografía en general, textos y ediciones de textos, el problema de orígenes y fuentes, relaciones de la literatura española con otras literaturas (todo lo cual es materia de los capítulos I, III, V, X), es decir, lo que en definitiva representa el aparato de la "crítica externa." El planteamiento de estas cuestiones presta, sin duda, un verdadero servicio de orientación a todo estudioso que se inicia en el Medievo español, tanto más cuanto en España han sido escasísimos los tratados en la materia.[3] Entre los segundos, esto es, los específicamente españoles, puede citarse el de "tradición y originalidad" que aun siendo común a todo el Medievo europeo, adquiere en España caracteres especiales gracias a la circunstancia peculiarísima de la convivencia de españoles con otras dos razas de estructura espiritual diferente. Resultado de todo ello son, en efecto, las

[1] Compárese la muy reciente de Agustín Millares Carlo, *Literatura española hasta fines del siglo XV* (México, 1950).

[2] A partir de 1940 se puede decir que España ha constituido su propria escuela de estilística bajo la dirección e inspiración de Amado Alonso y Dámaso Alonso, la cual se ha estado aplicando con éxito a la interpretación de épocas y obras literarias, desde el *Poema del Cid* hasta las manifestaciones más modernas de la literatura.

[3] El artículo más difundido ha sido el de Américo Castro, "La crítica filológica de los textos" en *Lengua, Enseñanza y Literatura* (Madrid, 1924), págs. 171-197, insuficiente para una orientación completa, y el menos conocido de Antonio Marín Ocete citado por el autor, "El estado actual de la crítica de textos" en *Boletín de la Universidad de Granada*, IV (1932), 349-361. Contrasta esta situación con la de Francia en donde la bibliografía ha sido numerosísima al respecto. Compárense entre otros los más recientes de F. Baldensperger, *La Critique et l'histoire littéraire en France* (París, 1947), y E. Bouvier y P. Jourda, *Guide de l'étudiant en littérature française*, 3a. ed. (París, 1950).

"transmutaciones culturales" y los "calcos linguísticos" que han dejado su huella en la obra literaria.[4]

Como cuestiones generales que implican una perspectiva cultural, el autor presenta temas tan sugestivos como el de la presencia de la antigüedad clásica en las obras medievales y que últimamente ha dado origen al estudio de los "tópicos" literarios[5] y a la determinación de la importancia de la retórica, aspecto aún no debidamente investigado.[6] Todo esto, naturalmente, con el fin de tratar de fijar con mayor precisión el ambiente cultural y espiritual de la época que debe conducir, sobre bases más sólidas, a una apreciación más exacta de la obra literaria. En este clima espiritual, el autor da la debida importancia al elemento religioso que como modalidad de vida de la época y como fuerte tradición literaria constituye, sin duda, una de las piedras angulares que estructuran la cultura del Medievo. No habría que llevar, sin embargo, la evidente tendencia de "ejemplaridad," de "ilustración" y de "didactismo" a extremos absolutos, ya que hay, sin duda, una veta de espontánea afirmación de vida terrestre que asoma aquí y allá en contrapunteo adventicio y fugaz con el tema principal.[7] Otro capítulo de interés es el de los

El autor dedica los dos capítulos finales, IX y X (págs. 133-171), al problema de los límites temporales entre el Medievo y el Renacimiento, y al del esclarecimiento de la noción de "Edad Media" en esta última época. Así mismo nos ilustra con una descripción de lo que ha sido la historia de los estudios medievales desde el primer medievalista Nicolás Antonio, en el siglo XIII, hasta nuestros días.

Característica del libro es, además, la orientación bibliográfica que lo anima, ya que obtenemos una perspectiva erudita de las cuestiones que trata, gracias a la referencia constante a los datos bibliográficos que nos informan sobre el planteamiento del problema, generalmente desde un punto de vista moderno. Este es, sin duda, uno de los aspectos valiosos del libro, el cual sin proponerse ser exhaustivo en la materia, ofrece los datos necesarios para obtener una visión particularizada y de conjunto de los problemas del Medievo literario en España.[8]

En suma, el libro de López Estrada sin agotar la materia por él tratada, sienta un precedente digno de encomio, al poner de relieve problemas de método que era

[4] Tema al que modernamente se le ha dado amplia proyección con el libro de Américo Castro, *España en su historia. Cristianos, Moros y Judíos* (Buenos Aires, 1948).

[5] Compárese el libro de E. R. Curtius, *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter* (Berna, 1948). Para lo español, véase la reseña del mismo libro por María Rosa Lida de Malkiel en *Romance Philology*, V (1952), 99-131.

[6] El autor se ha aplicado a este tema en su artículo "La retórica en las *Generaciones y semblanzas* de Fernán Pérez de Guzmán" en *Revista de Filología Española*, XXX (1946), 310-352.

[7] Compárese, por ejemplo, la valoración estilística que Américo Castro hace del *Libro de Buen amor* en su libro *España en su Historia* para quien la obra citada se caracteriza precisamente por la presencia alterna del elemento moralizante y su opuesto de afirmación epicúrea del amor. Este punto de vista lo confirma una vez más en su artículo "El *Libro de Buen Amor* del Arcipreste de Hita," *Comparative Literature*, IV (1952), 193-213, al señalar que es el estado de "fluencia" entre el amor "santo" y el amor "loco" lo esencialmente característico y definidor. "géneros literarios" (págs. 105-113) que en la época medieval se polarizan principalmente entre lo "popular" y lo "culto" con sus manifestaciones específicas de "mester de juglaría," y "mester de clerecía" y en la poesía lírica, estilo "popular" (canciones y romances) y estilo "culto" (cancioneros).

[8] Algunas veces como en el capítulo de la "Estilística" podrían incluirse algunos otros títulos que completan los ofrecidos por el autor. A la bibliografía crítica del profesor Helmut Hatzfeld, publicada en 1942, puede agregarse la del mismo autor, "Nuevas investigaciones estilísticas en las literaturas románicas (1932-

urgente tratar en el dominio de la literatura medieval española.[9] El libro es no sólo útil para los estudiantes universitarios que se inician en estas disciplinas, sino también para los profesores que encuentran en él un haz ordenado de materias que le incumben al mismo tiempo que se les recuerda que la erudición es apenas un aspecto instrumental en el verdadero estudio de la literatura.

GUSTAVO CORREA

Tulane University

RAINER MARIA RILKE-ANDRÉ GIDE. CORRESPONDANCE 1909-1926. Introduction et commentaires par Renée Lang. Paris: Corrêa, 1952. 286 p.

Beginning in 1909 and ending in 1926, the correspondence between Rilke and Gide covers the years before and after World War I. During the actual war years no letters were exchanged between the two authors, but Gide gave evidence of his respect and friendship for the German poet by taking it upon himself to protect possessions of Rilke that were left in France. Interesting epistolary exchanges between Gide, Romain Rolland, Stefan Zweig, and others, as well as entries in Gide's *Journal*, which are included in this book, give evidence of these efforts. The actual correspondence consists of only 43 letters by Rilke and 35 by Gide. However, these letters are so carefully annotated by Renée Lang that, together with her informative introduction, they represent a work indispensable to any biographer of the two writers. In addition to affording us an intimate glimpse into their lives, the letters provide the student of comparative literature with valuable data, and reveal, above all, Gide's and Rilke's early appreciation of such authors as Kierkegaard, Proust, and Valéry.

What makes this correspondence particularly interesting is the fact that it is a document of an international relationship between two outstanding writers—a relationship which survived World War I and the political strife and division that were its natural consequences in France and Germany. The letters vividly illustrate the fact—almost unique in the history of literature—that two men of the stature of Rilke and Gide not only paid tribute to each other but gave freely of their genius and time to translate each other's works in order to make them accessible to their compatriots. Fortunately, their efforts found intelligent support: Gide's partial translation of Rilke's *Malte Laurids Brigge* appeared in the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, and the Insel Verlag published Rilke's German version of the Gidean *Retour de l'Enfant Prodigue*. The quality of these translations is, of course, unequalled, and one is not surprised at the delight and mutual admiration which they aroused in the two authors. However, their later correspondence bears witness to an increasing lack of poetic affinity—in spite of their growing friendship—with Gide obviously failing to appreciate some of Rilke's finest works and Rilke politely refusing to translate Gide's *Nourritures terrestres*.

In her well-written introduction Renée Lang gives an intelligent appraisal of the two men and summarizes the story of their literary and personal friendship as mirrored by their correspondence and evidenced by accounts of common friends.

1945)" en *Boletín del Instituto de Filología de la Universidad de Chile*, IV (1944-1946), 8-77.

[9] Compárese este tipo de Manuales de orientación y divulgación de la Biblioteca Románica Hispánica, con los publicados por la casa editorial Winter de Heidelberg, y que con el título de "Winters Studienführer" se proponen brindar una orientación adecuada en el campo de la filología románica. Uno de los más recientes es el de Gerhard Rohlfs, *Romanische Philologie. I. Teil: Allgemeine Romanistik. Französische und provenzalische Philologie* (Heidelberg, 1950).

Although the date of their first personal encounter cannot be ascertained, Rilke recorded in one of his letters his exciting discovery of Gide's work—he had come across the German translation of the *Retour de l'Enfant Prodigue*, whose theme was to play so important a part in his own literary endeavors. Renée Lang rightly holds that the attraction of this theme for both authors proves initial affinity as well as Gide's influence on Rilke, but she asserts with equal justification that their divergent treatment of it exposes the fundamental differences between them.

An index of all the proper names occurring in the text, facsimiles of two of the letters, and portraits of Gide and Rilke complete this excellent book.

EDITH KERN

New Haven, Conn.

VARIA

PAUL SOBRY, 1895-1954

Just after having founded his Institute of Literary Scholarship at the University of Louvain, Paul Sobry was called from the scene of his literary activities, on January 25, 1954. He was not permitted to see the growth of a project which had been dear to him for years and which, with its well-planned divisions (criticism, history, theater, etc), now represents a unique "laboratory" in the field of the humanities. Professor Sobry, a familiar figure at international literary congresses, taught in this country during 1949 at Catholic University. He was a professor of literary theory, of Dutch and comparative literature, and, because of his interest in European baroque literature, may well be considered the continuator of the Góngora specialist Lucien-Paul Thomas at Louvain.

After having introduced *Stilforschung* into Belgium with his book on *Henry Newman* (1934), he edited *Renaissance, Barok en Klassiek in de Moderne Talen*, Volume III of the great *Algemene Literatuur Geschiedenis* (Utrecht, 1948). Professor Sobry himself wrote the Italian part of this volume, which excells in the description of the lyrical art of Petrarch. Professor Sobry was untiringly committed to produce a "perfect" history of literature, in which the aesthetic ergocentricity would be balanced by a strictly historical explanation utilizing all serious extant criticism. An assiduous reader and a meticulous self-critic, Professor Sobry has left much unpublished material, including a volume to be called *Van Dante tot Calderón*.

H. H.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Alciatore, Jules C. Stendhal et Maine de Biran. Geneva: Droz; Lille: Giard, 1954. vi, 47 p.

Barbi, Michele. Life of Dante. Translated and edited by Paul G. Ruggiers. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1954. x, 132 p.

Beer, Ernst. Thomas Stearns Eliot und der Antiliberalismus des XX. Jahrhunderts. Vienna: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1953. viii, 248 p. (Wiener Beiträge zur englischen Philologie, LXI. Band.)

Bell, Charles G. Songs for a New America. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1953. 80 p.

Brown, Calvin S. Tones Into Words, Musical Compositions as Subjects of Poetry. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1953. viii, 171 p.

Bulletin bibliographique de la Société Internationale Arthurienne (Paris), No. 5 (1953).

Coulson, J., and Natalie Duddington (editors). Russian Short Stories XIXth Century. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953. 240 p.

Dickason, David Howard. The Daring Young Men: The Story of the American Pre-Raphaelites. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1953. x, 304 p.

Diringer, David. The Hand-Produced Book. New York: Philosophical Library, 1953. xii, 603 p.

Fiqueiredo, Fidelino de. Um Coleccionador de Augústias. Lisbon: Guimarães, 1953. 321 p.

Gorges, Arthur. The Poems. Edited by Helen Estabrook Sandison. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953. lviii, 254 p.

Grillparzer, Franz. Sappho. Translated by Arthur Burkhard. Yarmouth Port, Mass.: Register Press, 1953. 99 p.

Hrozný, Bedřich. Ancient History of Western Asia, India and Crete. Translated by Jindřich Procházka. New York: Philosophical Library, 1953. xvi, 260 p., 9 pl.

Humphries, Rolfe (editor). New Poems by American Poets. New York: Ballantine Books, 1953. xx, 180 p.

Irwin, Richard Gregg. The Evolution of a Chinese Novel: Shui-hu-chuan. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953. ix, 231 p. (Harvard-Yenching Institute Studies, No. X.)

Jackson, Kenneth. Language and History in Early Britain: A Chronological Survey of the Brittanic Language First to Twelfth Centuries A.D. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953. xxvi, 752 p.

Jouhandeau, Marcel. Marcel and Élise. Preface by Henri Mondor; introduction and translation by Martin Turnell. New York: Pantheon Books, 1953. 223 p.

Olschki, Leonardo. Dante "Poeta Veltro." Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1953. 122 p., 5 pl.

Paré, Ambroise. Textes choisis, présentés et commentés par Louis Delaruelle et Marcel Sendrail. Paris: Société Les Belles Lettres, 1953. 292 p.

Person, Henry A. (editor). Cambridge Middle English Lyrics. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1953. viii, 92 p.

Secchi, Nicolò. Self-Interest. Translated by William Reymes. Edited by Helen Andrews Kaufman. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1953. xxix, 106 p.

Shine, Hill. Carlyle's Early Reading, to 1834, with an Introductory Essay on his Intellectual Development. Lexington: University of Kentucky Libraries, 1953. viii, 353 p.

Trawick, Buckner B. World Literature, Volume I: Greek, Roman, Oriental and Medieval Classics. New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1953. 280 p. (College Outline Series.)

Trevelyan, G. M. History of England. Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1953. 3 vols. 360, 320, 319 p.

Turbille-Petre, G. Origins of Icelandic Literature. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953. vii, 260 p.

Viereck, Peter. Dream and Responsibility: Four Test Cases of the Tension between Poetry and Society. Washington, D. C.: University Press of Washington, D. C., 1953. vi, 65 p.

Wais, Kurt. Frühe Epik Westeuropas und die Vorgeschichte des Nibelungenliedes. I. Band. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1953. 211 p.

Ward, William S. (compiler). Index and Finding List of Serials Published in the British Isles 1789-1832. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1953. xvi, 185 p.

Wyder, Hansuli. Gottlieb Wilhelm Rabener: Poetische Welt und Realität. Zürich: Buchdruckerei Emil Rüegg & Co., 1953. 132 p.

Year's Work in Modern Language Studies. Edited by C. S. Aston. Vol. XIV. 1952. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1954. x, 426 p.